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Denison's Select Plays

*The
Camouflage
of Shirley*

*by
Lindsey Barbee*

*T. S. Denison & Company
Publishers • Chicago
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T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

154 West Randolph Street

CHICAGO

The Camouflage of Shirley

A Comedy-Drama in Three Acts

BY

LINDSEY BARBEE

AUTHOR OF

"After the Game," "At the End of the Rainbow,"
"The Call of the Colors," "The Call of Wohelo,"
"The Dream That Came True," "The Fifteenth of
January," "Then Greek Met Greek," "Her First
Scoop," "The Kingdom of Heart's Content," "The
Promise of Tomorrow," "Sing a Song of Seniors,"
"The Spell of the Image," "The Thread of Destiny,"
"Tomorrow at Ten," "The Trial of Hearts," "A
Watch, a Wallet and a Jack of Spades," "When the
Clock Strikes Twelve," "The Whole Truth," "In the
College Days," "Let's Pretend—A Book of Children's
Plays," etc.



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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

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BY

LINDSEY BARBEE

OCT 19 1918, © CLD 50592

THE CAMOUFLAGE OF SHIRLEY

FOR EIGHT MEN AND TEN WOMEN CHARACTERS.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

(Named in order of appearance.)

MOLLY	<i>A Waitress</i>
CAPTAIN CLAY CALHOUN	<i>Of Kentucky</i>
LIEUTENANT WILLIAM JOSEPH WAYNE.....	<i>The Groom</i>
ANNETTE RICHMOND WAYNE	<i>The Bride</i>
SHIRLEY CARLISLE.....	<i>Who Wins a Service Pin</i>
JENNIE	<i>Who is Something of a Mystery</i>
WHITNEY CHARLTON	<i>"Captain Schepffel"</i>
RUTH HOYT.....	<i>Who Supplies Literature to the Training Camp</i>
NELL CHANDLER	<i>Who Knifs</i>
ROSE ROSS.....	<i>Who Allows Herself to be Loved</i>
MARY LOU LESTER.....	<i>Who is Tired of Being a Stay-at-Home</i>
NEIL RUTHERFORD	<i>A Slacker</i>
MRS. RICHMOND	<i>Annette's Mother</i>
HAL WINSTON....	}
WALTER WARREN.	
JACK MILLER....	
BOB BARTLETT....	
BETTINA	<i>Annette's Young Sister</i>

TIME—*Afternoon and Evening of a Midsummer Day.*
Year Nineteen-eighteen.

PLACE—*A Summer Resort on the Atlantic Coast.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*Two Hours and Fifteen Minutes.*

Act I—A tea room. Five o'clock in the afternoon.

Act II—A deserted cabin. Seven-thirty in the evening.

Act III—A sun parlor. On toward midnight.

STORY OF THE PLAY.

Captain Clay Calhoun, on his way to the front, meets at a summer resort his college friend, Lieutenant William Joseph Wayne, who has just been married. Enthusiastically upholding the war marriage, Wayne endeavors to bring Calhoun to his own way of thinking, but the Captain laughingly declares that War is his only lady love and that he is lacking even a flirtation or a sentimental episode.

The mysterious disappearance of state papers from the home of a war department official, Mr. Richmond (Wayne's father-in-law), gives rise to Calhoun's suggestion that there must be someone in the vicinity who is supplying the enemy with information. As a proof of his suspicion he tells of a mysterious signal flashed from a mountain top and received—supposedly—by a submarine. Wayne at first listens to the theory incredulously; then, after reflection, excitedly. They are about to depart upon an investigation of the matter when Annette—Mrs. Wayne—enters. Overwhelmed with pride, the Lieutenant presents the bride to his friend, neglecting to mention the Captain's name.

Shirley Carlisle, Mrs. Wayne's guest, eager to wear a service pin, decides to choose the name of some soldier who will never come her way, remain engaged to him just as long as she cares to wear the pin and announce her engagement at the little tea party which Annette is giving in her honor. A list of those sailing for France is carefully examined and the name of Captain Clay Calhoun is promptly appropriated. With the transfer of a ring and a borrowed service pin, Shirley boldly springs the news upon the assembled party—and in the midst of congratulations Lieutenant Wayne and Captain Calhoun enter. Natural complications follow.

In the meantime, Jennie, a waitress, secretly delivers the envelope stolen from Mr. Richmond's dispatch box to Mr. Charlton, who is, in reality, Captain Scheppel, a German spy, and who has been sending information obtained through Jennie to a near-by submarine. While in

the tea room Shirley recognizes him and addresses him as Captain Scheppel, declaring that she has met him in Berlin. Naturally he denies his identity, and in order to prevent Shirley from leaving the room and spreading the alarm, he kidnaps her and Mrs. Wayne and carries them to a deserted cabin, after ordering Jennie to drop the envelope in Shirley's knitting bag, so that he, in that way, may gain possession of the document without risking its being found on his person. At the cabin Shirley plays her wits against those of the spy. Captain Calhoun—who has seen the sudden departure—comes to the rescue, and after the dramatic entrance of Jennie, who is in reality an agent of the United States government, Scheppel is captured. The Captain, after his part in the day's excitement, realizes that War is, after all, an unsatisfactory lady love, and before the midnight hour has sounded Shirley is given the right to a service pin of her own.

SYNOPSIS FOR PROGRAM.

ACT I—A gallant Captain who scorns a lady love; a bride and groom of two weeks; an impulsive Shirley who picks a name at random, announces an engagement and brings complications upon herself. A mysterious signaling, a mysterious Jeanne Dupriez, a mysterious waitress who faints—without warning.

ACT II—Rain, thunder and lightning. An unexpected entrance of Captain Calhoun just as the game of "Hunt-the-envelope" proves a bit strenuous, results in the desired document changing hands. A signal is flashed—and a revolver is pointed "in the name of the law."

ACT III—The entering guests are greeted with a remarkable story. The slacker disappears—forever—and Jennie becomes Jeanne. Bettina's interview with the "soldier man" results in further complications—but Cupid is victorious over Mars.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

MOLLY—A bit rebellious in Act I; serious in Act III. Black gown and sheer white apron. In Act III, a raincoat and tam-o'shanter.

ANNETTE—Sweet and gracious. Petulant, restless and childish in Act II. Pretty summer gown and hat in Act I; same with man's overcoat in Act II. Evening gown in Act III.

SHIRLEY—Impulsive, high-spirited, vivacious—the finest type of the American girl. Summer gown and hat in Act I; same with man's overcoat in Act II; evening gown in Act III.

JENNIE—Very reserved in Act I; dramatic in Act II; dignified and poised in Act III. Black gown and sheer white apron in Act I; raincoat in Act II; evening gown in Act III.

THE GIRLS—Bright, attractive and up-to-date types. All wear light gowns and hats in Act I; evening gowns in Act III. ROSE is sentimental. MARY LOU matter-of-fact and inclined to be sarcastic.

MRS. RICHMOND—Imperious and wholly conventional. Elaborate evening gown and large feather fan.

BETTINA—Very serious. Simple, childish white dress with colored sash and hair ribbon. Hair may be bobbed or braided.

CALHOUN and WAYNE are types of the splendid, earnest young men of the present crisis. CALHOUN's reserve toward SHIRLEY shows a gradual weakening, but there is a seriousness through it all. Both wear uniforms.

CHARLTON—Typical characteristics of his nation. Wears plain business suit.

RUTHERFORD—White suit, shoes, Panama in Act I; dark suit and overcoat in Act II; uniform in Act III.

THE GUESTS—HAL, WALTER and JACK wear white trousers and dark coats. BOB wears a uniform.

NOTICE: The Publishers advise that the costumes for the soldiers should have such variation as not to interfere in any way with the Government regulations regarding the wearing of uniforms of the United States Army, Navy or Marine Corps. It is, of course, inferred that such costumes will be procured from a Costumer who undoubtedly will be able to supply something that will answer the purpose and avoid any criticism.

PROPERTIES.

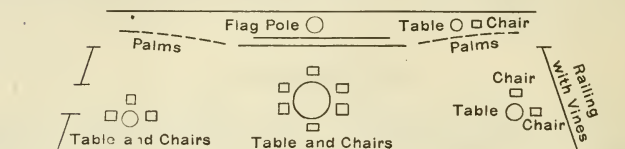
ACT I—Flag and flag pole. Green rugs for porch. Palms, potted plants, vines, etc. One large round table and six chairs. Three smaller tables and six chairs. Menu cards, runners, vases of flowers for small tables. Elaborate lunch cloth, floral center piece, nuts, candies, etc., for large table. Tray, glasses, tea service, sandwiches, finger bowls, etc., for Molly. Service pin for Molly. Roses for Annette. Knitting bag, ring and place cards for Shirley. Tray, ice tea, sandwich, lemonade, envelope and note for Jennie. Knitting and flower for Nell. Letter for Rose. Dog on long leash for Mary Lou. Cigarette for Calhoun. Knitting bags for girls.

ACT II—Table, lamp and matches with revolver in drawer of table. Chair and bench. Knitting bag with ball of yarn, envelope and handkerchief for Shirley. Revolvers for Calhoun and Charlton. Lantern for Jennie. Overcoats for girls.

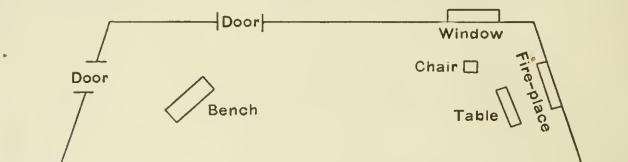
ACT III—Flags, palms, rugs, French window. Wicker settee, two large wicker chairs, telephone table with chair, pedestal with statue, piano lamp. Fan for Mrs. Richmond. Slippers, handkerchief and service pin for Bettina.

SCENE PLOT.

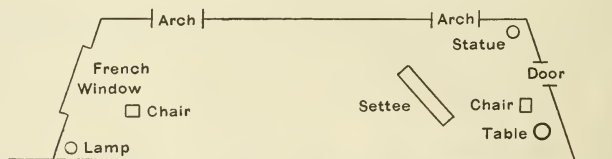
ACT I.



ACT II.



ACT III.



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *1 E.* first entrance; *U. E.* upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance up stage, etc.; up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

THE CAMOUFLAGE OF SHIRLEY

THE FIRST ACT.

SCENE: *A veranda tea room. Landscape drop with floating flag on flag pole at C. at Back. If possible, the back of the stage should be higher by a step or two than the front, and the steps covered with green porch rugs. Entrances at R. U. E. and L. U. E. Door R. C. Large round table at C. with six chairs. Small table with three chairs at R. 2 E. Small table with two chairs, L. 2 E. Small table with one chair on platform L. of C. at Back. Railing down L. with vines. Furniture should be of white wicker. Each table has a runner, a small vase with a flower or two in the center, a menu card. Large table is elaborately adorned with basket of roses for center, mints, nuts, olives, etc. Floor is covered with green rugs. Palms and potted flowers are arranged at bottom of steps, leaving wide space at C. for entrance.*

Curtain rises upon WAYNE at L. and CALHOUN at R. of table down R. MOLLY brings finger bowls and crosses to table at L. and reads paper. Stage is well illuminated as it is afternoon.

CALHOUN (*after using finger bowl*). So it's been wedding bells for you, old man! (*Pushes back his chair.*)

WAYNE. Two weeks ago to-night; we're just back from the honeymoon. (*Leaning forward*) Clay, she's the finest girl in the world.

CALHOUN. They all say that, Bill. Be original.

WAYNE. Wait until you see her—and you'll wish that Fate had given you just such a girl to leave behind you.

CALHOUN. Do you believe in this sort of thing?

WAYNE. What sort of thing?

CALHOUN. These war marriages.

WAYNE. Hasn't my course of action proved very conclusively that I do?

CALHOUN. It's a type of war hysteria.

WAYNE. In some cases, perhaps, not in ours.

CALHOUN. Sort of a continuous illustration of—"Marry in haste, repent at leisure."

WAYNE. Exceptions to every rule, Captain Calhoun.

CALHOUN. Granted. But why the hurry? If the love is the real thing, it will be all the stronger for the test—and the man will be all the better soldier for the separation.

WAYNE. The best old philosopher in the world couldn't make me believe *that*, Clay. For I know that I'll be a truer patriot and a better fighter—over there—since I know that Annette is waiting for me—over here.

CALHOUN. But you may not come back, Bill.

WAYNE. You put it brutally.

CALHOUN. War *is* brutal; we must face that fact from the first.

WAYNE. Then there is the memory—and Death itself can never rob us of the memory.

CALHOUN. You're the same old sentimentalist.

WAYNE. And you're the same old grouch.

CALHOUN. I'm not.

WAYNE. You are—and you need some nice girl to humanize you.

CALHOUN. Thanks for the kindly hint of my uncivilized state—but, remember, that for me, the only lady love is—war!

WAYNE. Not a single maid to weep over you?

CALHOUN. Nary a one.

WAYNE. Not even an episode—or a flirtation?

CALHOUN. Nothing doing. Look here, Bill. I'm in this struggle heart and soul—I'm going to have a whack at Kaiser Bill if it costs me my life—and even if there *were* a girl, I'd—

WAYNE (*quickly*). Marry her.

CALHOUN. Oh, no, I wouldn't.

WAYNE. Oh, yes, you would. (*Changing his bantering tone.*) When do you go?

CALHOUN. To New York—in the morning.

WAYNE. And you sail?

CALHOUN. Soon. My ambulance experience has been a boost, also my knowledge of French—so I'm promised the firing line. That's why I'm taking a last look at *this*—(*looking around*)—before I enter trench-land.

WAYNE. Let's hope that we'll make the same boat. (*As he looks about.*) Heavens, how I hate to leave it all!

CALHOUN. There! My point is proved. If you didn't have the domestic pull, going wouldn't be half so hard.

WAYNE. Don't you think it for a moment. Go to France and leave Annette, free and unattached, besieged by innumerable civilians? Not much.

CALHOUN. You're an incorrigible idiot. (*Rises and seats himself in chair nearer WAYNE.*) Look here, Bill. I want to ask you something.

WAYNE. Fire away.

CALHOUN. Mr. Richmond, your father-in-law, is an official in the war department, isn't he?

WAYNE. Close to headquarters, in fact. Did you see the morning papers?

CALHOUN. *Did I?* That's why I'm talking. The fact that his dispatch box was opened and valuable papers taken, needn't have been blazoned out for all the world to see.

WAYNE. How the papers got it is a mystery—in fact the whole thing is a mystery. No disturbance, no suspicion—and absolutely no clue to work upon.

CALHOUN (*whistling*). That's a queer proposition. Any other leaks lately?

WAYNE. Several. Fortunately, the public has not been notified of them.

CALHOUN (*abruptly*). What colors does an honest vessel carry at night?

WAYNE. Red to port and green to starboard. Why?

CALHOUN. Well, last night, late, from the beach—I saw, a couple of miles to the eastward, two green and two blue lights, dancing back and forth, to and fro, in a most suspicious manner. In a moment, the signal, if signal it was, was answered by a white flash from a mountain top. It blazed—stopped—and blazed again.

WAYNE. Well—what of it?

CALHOUN. In my humble opinion, there is some one in this place who is sending messages to an enemy war vessel.

WAYNE. Impossible!

CALHOUN. Nothing is impossible in these days. And *why* impossible?

WAYNE. Because a summer resort is hardly the suitable base for military operations.

CALHOUN. Even when an official of the war department has his home in that place?

WAYNE. He's seldom here.

CALHOUN. Nevertheless he's—*here*. And has it occurred to you that this particular coast with its islands and harbors, and these particular mountains with cracks and crevices and spruce and pine, are admirably adapted for concealment?

WAYNE. But—Clay! An alien vessel near the Atlantic coast—it's ridiculous!

CALHOUN. What about a submarine?

WAYNE. Germany has need for them nearer home.

CALHOUN. Not if they are the only means of carrying direct information in case of German agents failing to communicate by mail or by wireless.

WAYNE. Even so—it would take too long to transfer the information.

CALHOUN. Not with a submarine system of wireless relays across the ocean.

WAYNE (*rising and pacing back and forth.*) By Jove—I believe you're right.

CALHOUN (*rising*). Who patrols this coast?

WAYNE. I'll take you to him now. If we've got to buck any such interference as a submarine, we'd better be at it. (*Holds up check.*) Molly—just charge this.

MOLLY. Yes, lieutenant. (*Crosses to table, takes check, lays paper which she has been reading upon the table and removes finger bowls, going out at R. C.*)

ANNETTE, *with her hands full of roses, enters at L. U. E.*

ANNETTE (*dropping the roses.*) Billy Joe! (*Meets him at C.*)

WAYNE (*embracing her*) Why, Nan! (*Glancing around at the table.*) I declare, I'd forgotten all about your having a party here.

ANNETTE. Why, Billy Joe!

WAYNE (*pulling forward CALHOUN, who has gathered up the roses.*) But look at my excuse, Nan—an old Yale friend whom I found wandering about the hotel this afternoon.

ANNETTE. How splendid! (*CALHOUN places roses in her hand.*)

WAYNE. Bully old chap, too. We roomed together, footballed together, flunked together and—

CALHOUN. That'll be about enough from you, Bill. (*As he takes ANNETTE's hand.*) Mrs. Wayne. Something tells me that we are to become fast friends.

ANNETTE. I'm sure of it. Any friend of Billy Joe is a friend of mine. (*WAYNE stands back of ANNETTE.*)

CALHOUN. Oh, come, now. Try to like me for myself.

ANNETTE. I do—already.

CALHOUN. That helps a lot.

ANNETTE. Did you know Billy Joe *very* well?

CALHOUN. Almost too well.

ANNETTE (*anxiously*). Wasn't he as nice as he is now? (*WAYNE holds up warning finger.*)

CALHOUN. How could he be? He hadn't met *you*—then.

ANNETTE. Oh, I *do* like your pretty speeches.

WAYNE (*coming between them*). He doesn't mean a word of them. Not ten minutes ago he was upholding the joys of single blessedness.

MOLLY *enters at R. C. and stands down R.*

CALHOUN. But, you see, I hadn't met you—then.

WAYNE. Look here! I'm beginning to be glad that you're on your way to the front.

ANNETTE. Oh—are you on your way to the front?

CALHOUN. Tomorrow morning.

ANNETTE. Can't you put it off a day or so?

CALHOUN. War orders aren't elastic—unfortunately.

ANNETTE. But at least you'll come to-night—tell him about to-night, Billy Joe, and *make* him come.

WAYNE. I've told him already—and he's coming. (*Looks around.*) Where are the girls?

ANNETTE. Still at the movies. I ran out between reels to fix the table. (*Moves back of table at C.*)

WAYNE. And Shirley? (*Follows her.*)

ANNETTE. Stopped for the place cards. Oh, I wish you two would join the party.

WAYNE. We will—later. Right at present we're going up the beach—but it won't take long.

ANNETTE. Then I'll expect you. (*Slips her hand in WAYNE'S.*) Good-bye.

WAYNE (*as he leans over to kiss her*). Excuse us, please.

CALHOUN (*who has followed WAYNE*). Lucky dog, Bill.

WAYNE (*laughing*). And this from you—the woman hater! Come along. (*With a wave of their hats to ANNETTE they pass out at R. U. E.*)

ANNETTE (*as she rushes to MOLLY at R. 2 E., who has been regarding the scene with much interest.*) Oh, Molly, Molly! Isn't he wonderful?

MOLLY. Stunnin'. Visitin' you?

ANNETTE. Visiting *me*! Billy Joe visiting me!

MOLLY. Good gracious, Miss Nan. I ain't talkin' about Mr. Billy Joe. I'm all eyes for the Captain.

ANNETTE. And you think *he's* stunning? (*With dignity.*) I hadn't noticed. (*Walks to L. of table at C.*)

MOLLY. Stranger in these parts, I reckon.

ANNETTE. Yes—a college friend of Lieutenant Wayne. Now that I stop to think of it, Billy Joe forgot to mention his name. Did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous!

MOLLY (*sighing*). Another fine fellow to be shot at!

ANNETTE. Please don't say that, Molly, please don't. (*With forced cheerfulness.*) Oh, doesn't the table look pretty! Your work, I suppose. Come—let's put these roses around.

MOLLY (*as they lay a rose at each place at table at C*). Better have chosen bleedin' hearts, Miss Nan.

ANNETTE. How dreadful!

MOLLY. For there's mighty few things to be thankful about *these* days. Ugh—here's a thorn.

ANNETTE. I'm glad of it—you deserve to be pricked. (*Looking around the table.*) Now let me see—all ready but the place cards. What can be keeping Shirley? (*Stands L. of table.*)

MOLLY. First time Miss Shirley's been down? (*Stands at R. of table.*)

ANNETTE. The very first. She's too busy with Red Cross work this summer to—(*suddenly*). Oh, Molly—Molly—where did you get it? (*Rushes to her.*)

MOLLY. Get what?

ANNETTE. Your service pin.

MOLLY. Tim gave it to me.

ANNETTE. Oh, aren't you the proudest girl in the world—and the happiest?

MOLLY (*pausing*). No, I'm not the happiest—and you ain't, neither, Miss Nan.

ANNETTE. Oh, I am—I am.

MOLLY. Happy to let *him* go away?

ANNETTE. Proud to know that he wants to go. I shouldn't want the love of a man whose country didn't come first.

MOLLY. The country don't mean that much to me, Miss Nan. (*As she protests.*) Oh, I know that I ain't sayin' the popular thing—but I'm speakin' the truth.

ANNETTE. You don't want him to go?

MOLLY. I don't want him to go—there, it's out and I mean it. (*Passionately.*) Oh, it's different with you, Miss Nan—you have money, friends, and ev'rything—but Tim's my all—and a country ain't got the right to ask a woman to give up her all.

ANNETTE. That's wicked, Molly.

MOLLY. I ain't sayin' it's right—but it's natural—and when the ship puts that big ocean between me and Tim, there won't be anything left for me but the blackest kind of night.

ANNETTE (*touching her own pin*). It's a star for the night, Molly—a light in the darkness. I try to look at it that way.

MOLLY. Oh—Miss Nan—it ain't nothin' to me but a reminder of them who won't come back!

ANNETTE (*turning aside*). Oh, Molly, you must not say such cruel things—you must not. I'm trying so hard to be brave and I'm making myself believe that Billy Joe is going—just for a little while. (*Silence for a few moments, while ANNETTE covers MOLLY'S hand with her own, winks back the tears, forces herself to smile, then bends forward.*) Molly, are you going to marry him before he goes?

MOLLY (*smiling*). Rather. Do you think I'd let him loose among all them French high-fliers? Tim's a mighty good looker in his uniform, I'd have you know.

ANNETTE. Oh, don't let him think you're not trusting him.

MOLLY. It ain't Tim I'm not trustin'—it's them girls in gay Par-ee. (*Crosses to small table down R. and takes paper from it.*) Here's one of them now. (*Holds up paper.*) Got a name with a lot of letters you don't pronounce—say it, Miss Nan.

ANNETTE (*taking the paper*). Jeanne Dupriez. She is good-looking, isn't she? And what's she done?

MOLLY. Gone over to Kaiser Bill.

ANNETTE. I don't believe it. She looks too high bred. Let's see. (*Reads.*) Daughter of an illustrious house—many services to government—entrusted with a secret mission. (*Turns to MOLLY.*) What happened to her?

MOLLY. Nobody knows—dropped right out of ev'rything—never been heard from.

ANNETTE (*reading*). It is generally believed that she finally yielded to the propositions of the enemy, surrendered papers of great importance—(*pauses*). Well, I don't believe a word of it.

MOLLY. Neither do I. She looks like the kind that would answer any such proposition with bombs—bums—how do you say it, anyway?

ANNETTE (*looking thoughtfully at paper*). Jeanne Dupriez.

Enter SHIRLEY at L. U. E.

SHIRLEY. Did you think I'd been submarined? Met everybody I ever knew on the way over here and—(*hurrying to MOLLY*) well—hello, Molly! It wouldn't seem quite natural not to have you welcome me back.

(ANNETTE *lays paper on table down R., takes cards from SHIRLEY and slowly places them around the table at C.*)

MOLLY. And it's good to have you here, Miss Shirley. You'll find it pretty changed.

SHIRLEY (*looking around*). Not here. Same attractive place, just as I remember it. (*After a moment.*) The only thing missing, Molly, is your smile.

MOLLY. It's gone to war—with the men—Miss Shirley.

SHIRLEY. Nonsense. Its place is—here—in America. How are the women to fight without cheerfulness and hope as ammunition? (*Sets herself down R.*)

MOLLY. You haven't anybody—near to you—who's goin'—have you?

SHIRLEY (*with sudden seriousness*). No, I haven't—and I'm sorry—for it's a great privilege to wear a star.

ANNETTE. That's what I've been telling her. Now—let me see. Mary Lou *here*—Rose *there*—Nell next to you—and Ruth by me. Pretty, isn't it? Now, Molly, if you'll pour the water, we'll be quite ready. (*Stands L of table.*)

MOLLY. Yes, Miss Nan. (*Exit at R. C.*)

SHIRLEY (*rising*). Even Molly has a service pin. I feel like an outsider. (*Sets herself at R. of table at C.*)

ANNETTE. It's your own fault. If you'd cared a little more about men—

SHIRLEY. But I don't—and I can't—and I won't.

ANNETTE. Then what can you expect? I shouldn't think you'd *want* a service pin. (*Sets herself at front of table at C., turning half-way to audience.*)

SHIRLEY. But Nan, dear, I haven't said I couldn't care for a *man*! Why, I'd give anything if I had someone in this big world war—someone I could work for—be proud of—and wait for.

ANNETTE (*in surprise*). Why, Shirley Carlisle, I never before heard you talk like this. It isn't a bit like you.

SHIRLEY. Midsummer madness, perhaps. But Nan, I want a service pin—and I want a soldier—even if I have to *pretend* him.

ANNETTE. What do you mean?

SHIRLEY. Just what I say—pretend him.

ANNETTE. Oh—an imaginary person?

SHIRLEY. Not at all. Who wants a shadow when the substance is available?

ANNETTE. Then you're going to adopt a Sammy?

SHIRLEY. Wrong again. I intend to kidnap one—and what is more—I insist upon being engaged to him.

ANNETTE. *Shirley!*

SHIRLEY. Doesn't a fiancé entitle one to a service pin?

ANNETTE. I suppose it does.

SHIRLEY. Well, it will in this case, anyway.

ANNETTE. I—don't—quite—understand—you.

SHIRLEY. It's very simple. I'll choose the name of some soldier—someone I've never heard of, never will meet, and who'll never hear of me—and I'll be engaged to him just as long as I care to wear the pin.

ANNETTE. Isn't that rather hard on the man?

SHIRLEY. Hard on the man! Well, I like that.

ANNETTE. Of course if he never sees you—and doesn't know you—

SHIRLEY. Don't make it worse.

ANNETTE. No—Shirley—I don't approve.

SHIRLEY. That's just your old ulcerated conscience. Look here. What possible harm can there be in exploiting a fiancé who will never know and who ought to be thankful that he is allowed the privilege of making love—in *absentia*.

ANNETTE (*relenting*). It would be fun—

SHIRLEY. To announce it at the tea party? Rather.

ANNETTE. You haven't a ring.

SHIRLEY. Oh, yes, I have—my own all right—nobody will ever recognize it. (*Transfers ring from right hand to left.*)

ANNETTE. You haven't a service pin—and I won't lend you mine.

SHIRLEY. Wait till I ask you. I'm trusting Molly to help me out in that little detail.

ANNETTE. Then what else do you need?

SHIRLEY. Merely the man.

ANNETTE. It won't take a moment to settle him. (*Rises,*

goes to table down R. and takes paper.) Here's a paper—and a list of those sailing for France.

SHIRLEY. *France*—that's good. Distance lends safety—as well as enchantment.

ANNETTE (*reads*). John Anderson—

SHIRLEY. My Jo, John. No, thanks.

ANNETTE. Reginald Courtney—

SHIRLEY (*making a grimace*). Next!

ANNETTE. Fritz Schondenbauer—

SHIRLEY. Himmel—no!

ANNETTE. You're too hard to please. (*Reads.*) John Mason, William Price, Frederick Wilson, Matthew Pierce, Clay Calhoun—

SHIRLEY. Stop right there. Clay Calhoun—it's wonderful! Even if he is a private I must have him.

ANNETTE. He's a captain.

SHIRLEY. Still more wonderful. Where's he from?

ANNETTE. Kentucky.

SHIRLEY. I adore Kentucky men.

ANNETTE. You don't adore any man.

SHIRLEY. But I do like 'em tall!

ANNETTE. Captain Clay Calhoun!

SHIRLEY (*rising*). Shirley Carlisle Calhoun! Doesn't it sound like a magazine name?

Enter MOLLY at R. C. with a tray of glasses.

SHIRLEY. Molly, will you do me a favor—oh, the greatest favor in the world? (*Goes to R. 2 E.*)

MOLLY. And what is there, Miss Shirley, that I can be doing for you?

SHIRLEY (*rising*). Lend me your service pin.

MOLLY (*setting down tray on table at R. 2 E.*) What?

SHIRLEY. Lend me your service pin—just for a little while—and I'll tell you—why—tomorrow.

MOLLY. My service pin—

SHIRLEY. I didn't think you'd mind.

MOLLY. Mind? Not much. It ain't as if I was partin' with the crown jewels. (*Takes off pin and passes it to SHIRLEY, who pins it on.*)

SHIRLEY. There! I'm ready.

JENNIE *enters at R. C., crosses, and busies herself at table at L. 2 E.*

MOLLY. But I thought you didn't have anybody to send to war?

SHIRLEY. I didn't—ten minutes ago—but now—something's happened.

ANNETTE (*nodding toward JENNIE*). Who is she?

MOLLY (*shrugging her shoulders*). That's Lady Clara Vere de Vere.

ANNETTE. Lady—what?

MOLLY. Jennie's her real name and she's taking Maud's place for a week or so.

ANNETTE. Why do you call her Lady—whatever it is?

MOLLY. Because she looks it and acts it.

SHIRLEY. I think she's pretty.

MOLLY. She thinks so, too.

SHIRLEY (*starting toward L*). Come along, Nan—let's meet the girls.

ANNETTE. And spring the news? (*Joins SHIRLEY at L.*)

SHIRLEY. That's for later on.

ANNETTE (*turning*). 'By, Molly. (*As they go out the door.*) Shirley Carlisle Calhoun!

SHIRLEY. Ripping, isn't it? (*Exeunt SHIRLEY and ANNETTE at L. U. E. MOLLY proceeds to place the glasses of water around the table. JENNIE wanders listlessly to L. U. E.*)

JENNIE (*as she looks after SHIRLEY and ANNETTE*). Pretty, aren't they?

MOLLY (*stiffly*). They are considered so.

JENNIE. Friends of yours?

MOLLY (*emphatically*). Intimate and lifelong friends.

JENNIE. Who are they?

MOLLY. Nobody as can be discussed in public. (*Goes out R. C. violently whistling a patriotic air.*)

CHARLTON *enters from L. U. E. and seats himself at table down L.* JENNIE stands by him with pencil and paper, waiting for his order.

CHARLTON (*with eyes on the menu card*). Coast clear?

JENNIE. For the present.

CHARLTON. Why did you choose this public place?

JENNIE. Because it *is* public.

CHARLTON. Was your mission successful?

JENNIE. The morning paper told you that.

CHARLTON. Then you have discovered when the next transport is to sail?

JENNIE. Yes.

CHARLTON. The code—

JENNIE (*taking small envelope from pocket*). Is here.

CHARLTON. Keep it with you.

JENNIE. I can't.

CHARLTON. And why?

JENNIE. I'm followed—I'm watched.

CHARLTON. By whom?

JENNIE. I do not know. I can only feel that someone knows—and waits.

CHARLTON (*sharply*). A case of nerves.

JENNIE. By this time you should know that nerves are not on my schedule.

CHARLTON. Then prove it by keeping that envelope.

JENNIE. I can't—and it is not in my contract.

CHARLTON. What do you mean?

JENNIE. That my work with you ends—tonight.

CHARLTON. The night is not over.

JENNIE. It is—as far as my part in your plans.

CHARLTON. Is your information correct?

JENNIE. It is from headquarters.

CHARLTON. But lately, reports even from headquarters have not tallied with actual events.

JENNIE. Change in administration policies unfortunately cannot be foreseen. My task has been merely to obtain the information—not to be responsible for alterations.

CHARLTON. I understand that.

JENNIE. Then this is better transferred to you. (*Gives him the envelope.*)

CHARLTON. No—I refuse—I—

Enter MOLLY R. C. with tray of cups and saucers which she carries to ANNETTE'S place at L. of table.

JENNIE (*writing*). Ice tea—sandwich—(*goes out R. C. as CHARLTON slips envelope in his pocket.*)

Enter ANNETTE at R. U. E., goes to chair L. of table at C. She is followed by RUTH and NELL, the latter knitting as she walks.

RUTH (*pausing by ANNETTE*). Oh, how pretty! Look, Nell.

NELL (*walking slowly across the stage*). I can't look—no matter what's there. If I raise my eyes from this row, I'll drop a stitch.

ANNETTE. Bring the tea, Molly. The others are following. (*MOLLY exits at R. C.*)

RUTH (*as she crosses back of table*). Roses! Place cards! Oh, Nan, you extravagant thing—and in war times, too! (*Finds her place at ANNETTE'S left and stands back of her chair with back to audience.*)

ANNETTE. Don't worry. I've economized on the food.

NELL (*finishing her row*). There! (*Turns.*) Oh, it is pretty! (*Finding her card at RUTH'S left.*) And I'm right by Shirley. What luck! Positively, meal time is the only

chance I have to lay down the knitting needle. (*Hangs bag on chair.*)

In the meantime, SHIRLEY and ROSE have entered at R. U. E. and are standing at C. in F., reading letter. MOLLY enters at R. C. and brings tea to ANNETTE.

RUTH. Hurry up, Rose. You can read your letter here.

NELL. Is it from the French soldier or the Tommy? (*SHIRLEY crosses, followed by ROSE.*)

ROSE. Neither. My Sammy sent it. We're getting on famously.

SHIRLEY (*finding her place at NELL's left and hanging bag on chair*). He certainly covered some ground in that letter. (*Indicates place at her left for ROSE.*)

RUTH. You're engaged to all three, aren't you? (*All seat themselves.*)

ROSE. Only two. Correspondence course, you know. (*ANNETTE pours tea, which MOLLY serves.*)

SHIRLEY. Sammy shows every indication of being the next on the list.

ROSE. Yes, I think so. Whenever they write "After the war—who knows?" I realize that it is all up with them.

NELL. Your conduct is scandalous—perfectly scandalous!

JENNIE *enters at R. C. with CHARLTON's order, places it on the table and withdraws at R.*

ROSE. Doing one's bit is never scandalous. Allowing myself to be loved is simply my contribution to war service.

RUTH. I dare say that the proper authorities would prefer that you direct your energies toward other ends.

ROSE. My greatest talent lies in this line. Therefore I dedicate it to the cause. (*Complacently.*) Nobody else could do it half so well.

NELL. Nobody else would have the nerve. It's a waste of time.

ROSE. Making other people happy is never a waste of

time, my dear—it's a gracious gift from heaven. And "after the war—who knows?" One of them may prove my fate. (*Coaxingly.*) Nan, may I have another lump of sugar? Being sweet to three men is a downright extravagance. (*MOLLY passes sugar.*)

ANNETTE. Where's Mary Lou?

ROSE. Conservation met an enemy pup and began hostilities. Mary Lou is probably offering peace proposals.

As MARY LOU enters at R. U. E. with dog.

ROSE. Oh, here she is—who beat?

MARY LOU. Conservation could have chewed up that pup without half trying, but I wouldn't let him. It's meatless day, you know. Sorry to keep you waiting. (*As she slips dog's chain over chair.*) Con—apologize to the hostess. (*MOLLY serves sandwiches.*)

NELL. If I had been cheated out of a perfectly good meal I'd apologize to nobody.

MARY LOU (*seating herself at ANNETTE's right*). Why all the spiffiness? Somebody intend to announce an engagement?

SHIRLEY (*who has been gazing intently at CHARLTON*). Nan, who is he?

ANNETTE (*halfway turning*). One of the hotel guests. I don't know him. Why?

SHIRLEY. I've met him—at least I think I have. You'll excuse me for a moment? (*Rises and approaches CHARLTON with outstretched hand.*) Captain Scheppel! It is indeed a great surprise to see you on this side of the water.

CHARLTON (*who has risen*). There is some mistake in identity, I fear.

SHIRLEY. I think not—for I rarely forget faces. You surely haven't forgotten the inquisitive American girl who was in Berlin several years ago and to whom you explained so many interesting things—such as machine guns.

CHARLTON. My dear young lady, it's my misfortune and my loss not to be the friend you seek—but the privilege of

meeting you has never come my way. I regret it exceedingly.

SHIRLEY. And I apologize for my mistake. (*Rescates herself at table.*)

MARY LOU. Who is he, Shirley? (*MOLLY goes out at R.*)

SHIRLEY. He's somebody who thinks I don't know that he knows that I think he's somebody else.

MARY LOU (*sarcastically*). How well you put things! I feel as if I had been introduced. Now that I know all about him I'll see that he gets a Red Cross button. Speaking of Red Cross—have you heard the latest? (*Tells story to the others as—*)

JENNIE *enters at R. C. and makes her way to CHARLTON, presumably with his check.*

CHARLTON (*as JENNIE stands at his right with back to the girls*). Take this. (*Slips envelope along the table.*)

JENNIE. I can't—I told you why.

CHARLTON. Well—I've been recognized—

JENNIE. Recognized?

CHARLTON. By Miss Carlisle—there at the table opposite Mrs. Wayne. She means mischief—and I cannot leave this place with any document on my person.

JENNIE. What's to be done?

CHARLTON. You know the date of sailing?

JENNIE. Yes—

CHARLTON. Then signal it—seven-thirty—in my stead.

JENNIE. I can't—I can't—

CHARLTON. You can—and will—or—

JENNIE (*after a pause*). As you say. But why not you?

CHARLTON (*coolly*). I intend to kidnap Miss Carlisle.

JENNIE. This isn't a medieval situation.

CHARLTON. But it is a desperate one. That girl must not leave this room to spread any alarm—and you and I must both depart tonight.

JENNIE. I had planned to do so.

CHARLTON. I'll be outside—after I leave this room. When I signal, tell Miss Carlisle that an old friend wishes to speak to her on the driveway. I'll do the rest.

JENNIE. Where do you take her?

CHARLTON. To the cabin on the mountain. Join me there—after you signal. You understand?

JENNIE. Perfectly. But the paper?

RUTHERFORD *appears at L. U. E. and watches, unperceived.*

CHARLTON. Drop it in Miss Carlisle's knitting bag as you pass. I'll secure it later.

JENNIE. But—

CHARLTON. Do as I say.

JENNIE moves away back of table at C. RUTHERFORD goes to table L. of C. in F. As JENNIE passes SHIRLEY's chair she drops the envelope in the bag. CHARLTON, after watching JENNIE's movements, rises and goes out L. U. E. RUTHERFORD steps forward and motions to JENNIE, who goes to him, takes his order and goes out R. C.

MARY LOU. There's Neil Rutherford, old slacker.

ROSE. I like him just the same.

MARY LOU. Your judgment as regards men, my dear, is not to be trusted.

NELL. Let's call him over and rub it in. (*Calls.*) Neil!

RUTHERFORD (*advancing*). I've just been waiting to be signalled. (*Greets SHIRLEY.*) Well, Shirley, it's great to see you again. (*Stands back of her chair.*)

NELL. How did you leave the trenches?

RUTH. Isn't it hot weather for drilling?

MARY LOU. And how very becoming your khaki is!

RUTHERFORD (*laughingly, as he raises his hands*). Kam-erad! Kamerad!

MARY LOU. It's no fun teasing you, Neil; you're too good natured.

RUTHERFORD. And having a clear conscience helps, you know.

MARY LOU. A clear conscience—a civilian suit—and a wartime situation! There ain't no such animal!

ROSE. I wish you'd enlist—or do something patriotic, Neil. I get so tired of hearing you discussed.

RUTHERFORD. Give me time.

MARY LOU. We've been giving you time until there's hardly any left. Maybe that's what you want.

RUTHERFORD. I refuse to be entangled in the snares of any discussion. So long! (*Retires to table.*)

JENNIE *enters at R. C., serves him with lemonade, slips him a note and goes out R. C.*

ROSE. There! I expect he's peeved.

RUTH. I don't care if he is. I just saw that girl slip him a note.

ANNETTE. So he's *that* kind of a flirt!

NELL. Too fond of the limousine life to be a soldier.

SHIRLEY. Is he as rich as all that?

MARY LOU. Disgustingly so.

ANNETTE. He ought to be serving his country.

RUTH. Everybody ought to be doing that.

NELL. Oh dear—that means that I must get out my knitting again. (*Sighs.*) Each thought a pur! (*Starts to knit.*)

ANNETTE. We're all trying to be useful, but it seems such a mite when there is so much to be done.

ROSE (*complacently*). Well, as I said before, I am doing my bit—and doing it very satisfactorily.

NELL. And the doctor has told me to choose between blindness and nervous prostration. Still I knit!

ROSE. Well, in addition to my Red Cross work, I have

the responsibility of sending good literature to the training camps.

ROSE. If you are planning to send *Literary Digest* and *Atlantic Monthly*, I'll warn you that they don't want them. I mail my soldiers *Vogue* and *Woman's Home Companion*.

RUTH. Rose!

ROSE. Why not? They like to know that such things as fashions and fripperies still exist. They told me so.

NELL. You're demoralizing to any camp.

ROSE. Oh, no, I'm not. I'm the original sunshine scatterer. Nan, may I have another lump of sugar? (ANNETTE *passes sugar*.)

MARY LOU. I'm tired of being a stay-at-home. I want to go to France. (RUTHERFORD *goes off at R. U. E.*)

SHIRLEY. So do I. No one can drive an ambulance any better than I.

MARY LOU. Then why don't you go?

SHIRLEY. Dad won't let me unless I marry a soldier who will take me along.

MARY LOU. Well, even matrimony would be endurable under such conditions. Oh, why was I born a woman! Here we are—all wearing service pins and letting the men do all the work.

ROSE. Shirley hasn't a pin.

ANNETTE. Have you looked—carefully?

ROSE (*looking*). Why—why—*Shirley!* You didn't have it this morning.

RUTH. Hold up your left hand.

NELL. She's blushing!

MARY LOU. And this tea party did mean an engagement. I knew it.

ROSE. Who is he, Shirley?

SHIRLEY (*dramatically*). Captain Clay Calhoun!

ROSE. Clay Calhoun. (*Sighs*.) What a heavenly name!

(ANNETTE, during the conversation, smiles behind her hand.)

RUTH. Have we ever met him?

SHIRLEY. No—I'm quite sure you haven't.

NELL. How long have you been engaged to him?

SHIRLEY. Just lately. (*Pauses.*) Very lately.

MARY LOU. Tell us how he looks.

SHIRLEY. Well—he's tall—

MARY LOU. What color are his eyes?

SHIRLEY. Let me see. Dark—sometimes—and light—other times. You know what I mean.

MARY LOU. I don't at all—but never mind that. Dark hair?

SHIRLEY. Well, it's dark one way you look at it and light when the sun shines through it. *You* know.

MARY LOU. He sounds like a human chameleon. Hasn't he any definite features?

RUTH. How does it happen that you've never spoken of him?

SHIRLEY (*with great solemnity*). There are some things, Ruth, too deep in one's heart to talk about.

NELL. When will you be married?

SHIRLEY. Oh, I don't know. (*Puts handkerchief to eyes.*) He's going—to France

RUTH. Oh—I'm so sorry.

MARY LOU. Well, don't take it like that. Be sensible.

RUTH (*rising and putting her arm about SHIRLEY*). I know just how you feel. I have—three—myself—over there!

NELL. What fun if he could walk in upon us!

CALHOUN and WAYNE appear at L. U. E.

ANNETTE. Here's Billy Joe—won't he do as well?

(*The two men make their way to the table and stand down L.*)

WAYNE. Hello, girls, here's a good old Yale man for you to meet. I'll introduce you to him in a bunch and straighten you out afterwards. (*With a flourish.*) Ladies—Captain Clay Calhoun!

(*There is a breathless silence. SHIRLEY rises and crosses to R. 2 E. ANNETTE hurries to her, crossing back of table. They stand as if petrified.*)

NELL (*rising*). My wish has come true. (*Comes forward with outstretched hands.*) Captain Calhoun, what a perfectly lovely surprise! (*Crosses and stands by SHIRLEY.*)

RUTH (*hurrying to him*). Shirley's just told us the news—congratulations! (*Shakes hands effusively and stands at his left.*)

ROSE (*joining them*). She is the most wonderful girl in the world—but of course you know that without my saying so. (*Stands at his right.*)

MARY LOU (*scrutinizing him as she shakes his hand*). Your eyes aren't shifty—your hair isn't dyed—so I begin to think you are a perfectly definite proposition. In fact I quite approve of you. (*CALHOUN stands dazed through it all.*)

WAYNE (*who, puzzled, is standing back of table*). What is the matter with all you girls?

NELL. Why, don't you know? Shirley's just announced her engagement to Captain Calhoun.

WAYNE. *What?*

NELL. You weren't in the secret? What a joke on you!

WAYNE (*crossing*). See here, Clay, what does this mean? (*Stands between ROSE and CALHOUN.*)

CALHOUN (*bewildered*). You heard the statement, didn't you?

WAYNE. Well, I want *you* to explain.

CALHOUN. It seems to have been sufficiently explained—

RUTH. Rather, with a ring, a service pin, and—

WAYNE. Well, why in thunderation did you tell me all

that rot about war being your only lady love—and nary a maid to weep for you?

CALHOUN. Wait Bill—give a fellow the chance to collect his wits.

WAYNE. Thought you were a sly old dog, didn't you? And that you'd get the laugh on me? Well, if there is any humor in this situation, I fail to see it.

CALHOUN. I agree with you.

WAYNE. Engaged all the time to Shirley Carlisle, my wife's best friend, and couldn't tell me about it. You're all kinds of an idiot, Clay Calhoun.

CALHOUN. Look here, Bill, I don't like your tone.

WAYNE. And I don't like your idea of a joke.

ANNETTE (*who has come down to front stage*). Billy Joe! (*Stamps foot.*) Come here. (*WAYNE crosses to her as the girls surround CALHOUN, gaily chattering.*) It's all your fault. (*Stamps foot again.*) All your fault, I say! Why didn't you tell me that man's name? If you had, of course Shirley wouldn't have been engaged to him.

WAYNE (*bewildered*). Say that again—I don't get you.

ANNETTE. Nobody but you is to blame for it.

WAYNE. Blame for what?

ANNETTE. Shirley's engagement.

WAYNE. How in the dickens am I to blame for Shirley's engagement? I didn't even know of it.

ANNETTE. It never would have happened if you had told me the name of that man.

WAYNE. I don't know what you mean.

ANNETTE. Oh, yes you do—and it's your fault that Shirley isn't engaged to somebody else.

WAYNE. A moment ago I was to blame for her being engaged to Clay. Is everybody crazy?

ANNETTE (*weeping*). No—just you.

WAYNE. Look here, Nan—

ANNETTE. If you'd only explained—

WAYNE (*seizing her arm*). Well, somebody besides me is going to do a little explaining.

ANNETTE. Don't jerk my arm, William Joseph.

WAYNE. And she's going to do it right now. (*Turns her around and forces her protestingly to back stage.*)

ANNETTE (*as she passes SHIRLEY*). It's all your fault, Shirley. If you hadn't chosen that name—

(WAYNE pushes her to table on porch at which they seat themselves. ANNETTE tells the story in pantomime, WAYNE listens, incredulous at first, and is gradually overcome with mirth.)

RUTH. Going tomorrow morning, aren't you, Captain? And here we are stealing your very last moments with Shirley. (*Suddenly.*) Or perhaps you are expecting to take her with you?

CALHOUN (*decisively*). I think not.

NELL (*taking flower from belt and crossing to him*). Well, in case there should be a wedding, here's a bit of a decoration. (*Pins it on him.*) Now you look like a real bridegroom. (CALHOUN's expression becomes more set.)

MARY LOU. Cheer up, Captain. We're going and then you can have Shirley all to yourself. Conservation, salute the Captain—give him your paw and wish him luck. (CALHOUN grimly takes the outstretched paw.)

ROSE. It's been the loveliest kind of a surprise—Clay—(*coquettishly*). You don't mind if I call you Clay, do you?

CALHOUN (*with an effort*). Oh, no—certainly not.

(*The sound of a bugle is heard. The girls rush to C.*)

RUTH. The flag—they are lowering it. (*Looks off R.*)

(CALHOUN goes to steps, stands at attention, as does WAYNE. As the bugle call dies away, ANNETTE and WAYNE leave the porch and the girls crowd off together. ROSE turns and waves.)

ROSE. Till tonight! (*Exit all but CALHOUN and SHIRLEY. For a moment SHIRLEY and CALHOUN calmly survey each other.*)

CALHOUN (*coolly*). Well?

SHIRLEY. Well?

CALHOUN. I'm waiting for an explanation.

SHIRLEY. I flatter myself that the situation has been made—quite obvious.

CALHOUN. A man who has been matrimonially disposed of naturally desires—details.

SHIRLEY. You've really been corking about it all. I'm duly grateful.

CALHOUN. Don't bestow unmerited gratitude. If there had been a possible chance to escape—I should have escaped.

SHIRLEY. You might have denied the story. (*Seats herself R. of table at C.*)

CALHOUN. But that would have been decidedly uncomfortable for you, I fancy. (*Crosses back of table.*)

SHIRLEY. Oh, quite. But discipline is wholesome.

CALHOUN. Down in Kentucky we don't discipline women.

SHIRLEY. So I've heard. In fact, as soon as I saw you, I was quite sure that I might continue in my dark career of crime—unchecked.

CALHOUN. Don't make a comedy out of this.

SHIRLEY. Comedy? Isn't breaking one's engagement usually considered—tragedy?

CALHOUN. Is it presumption in me to ask how long I've been—appropriated? (*Seats himself back of table.*)

SHIRLEY. Hardly a half hour. Quite record breaking, isn't it? You see, I'm not really engaged to you.

CALHOUN. Indeed! In my present bewildered condition, any explanation is gratefully received.

SHIRLEY. It was your name. If you had been Fritz Schondenbauer you would have escaped.

CALHOUN. What's the matter with my name?

SHIRLEY. Nothing. That's the point. It is temptingly alliterative, aristocratic and alluring.

CALHOUN. How did you ever hear of me?

SHIRLEY. Oh, let's eliminate—*you*. It's only your name that's important. I found it in a paper and immediately took possession.

CALHOUN. But why?

SHIRLEY. In order to wear a service pin a fiancé was necessary. Now do you see?

CALHOUN. Was it impressed upon your vivid imagination that there was a possibility of my appearing?

SHIRLEY. Oh, no. I thought you were safe in France. Your entrance at the crucial moment was a trifle disconcerting. One doesn't expect such things to happen in real life.

CALHOUN. Well, what's the rest of the story? (*Rises.*)

SHIRLEY. The rest of the story? Isn't that rather up to you?

CALHOUN. I suppose you wish me to continue in this ridiculous rôle.

SHIRLEY. Only until tomorrow morning, when fate kindly removes you from the scene of action. A violent quarrel will be the cause of the broken engagement.

CALHOUN (*after a pause*). I'll do my best.

SHIRLEY. Brave man! (*Whimsically.*) Is it so very disagreeable?

CALHOUN. Well, it doesn't exactly appeal to me.

SHIRLEY. I've made you the center of attraction.

CALHOUN. And forced me to listen to a lot of silly twaddle.

SHIRLEY. In which excessive attention was lavished upon you. Why, you're leading man without any effort on your part.

CALHOUN. That's just it. I prefer to manage my own affairs and to reach the limelight through my own endeavors. (*Walks to back of stage.*)

SHIRLEY. One of these masterful men. Dear me!

CALHOUN (*looking out*). It's getting late.

SHIRLEY. And you probably have other things to do.

CALHOUN. Not at all. You must have realized the finality of your friends' suggestion that my last moments were to be spent with Shirley.

SHIRLEY. Well, haven't I amused you? Haven't you seen my poor little house of cards collapse? Haven't you heard me bid adieu to all my hopes and dreams and aspirations? (*Puts handkerchief to eyes.*)

CALHOUN (*coming close to her*). Oh, come now—if you take it like that—

SHIRLEY (*laughing*). Oh—Clay Calhoun—haven't you any sense of humor? (*Rises.*)

CALHOUN. Only a keen appreciation of the ridiculous.

SHIRLEY (*going to steps*). It's cloudy—fitting climax to our melodrama and the proper moment for the desperate heroine to venture into the cold, cold world. To be quite realistic the rain should be dashing, the thunder crashing and the lightning flashing as weeping she leaves the home of her childhood, equipped only with—

CALHOUN. A knitting bag. (*Takes her bag from the chair.*) Don't forget yours. (*As she takes it a large ball of yarn falls out. He dives for it.*) Every good patriot carries just such a cannon ball as this, doesn't she?

SHIRLEY. Of course. It serves as a weapon of defense—it helps to ensnare masculine hearts—

CALHOUN. And to trip masculine feet. Between acts the other night the usher had to extricate me from a tangled web.

SHIRLEY. And one *could* hide love letters in it.

CALHOUN. Better say a state document. (*Half to himself.*) By Jove, it would be a good means of transportation and nobody would suspect.

Enter JENNIE at R. C.

JENNIE. I beg your pardon for the interruption, Miss

Carlisle, but a friend asks you to see her for just a moment. Her car is at the rear.

SHIRLEY. Ask her to come around to the front. It's probably Mrs. Wayne.

JENNIE. She has only a minute to spare and has a message for you.

SHIRLEY. How strange! Very well—tell her I'm coming. (*Exit JENNIE at R. C.*). Good-bye, Clay. (*Holds out her hand.*) Till tonight.

CALHOUN (*as he takes her hand*). Till tonight—Shirley.

SHIRLEY. That's splendidly done. If you could slip in an occasional *dear*, it would help.

Enter ANNETTE from L. U. E.

ANNETTE (*crossing*). We're waiting, Shirley. The car is in front and I'm to bring you, too, Captain. Billy Joe has gone to send a telegram but will join us later. (*To CALHOUN.*) You'll come?

CALHOUN. Of course I'll come.

ANNETTE. And will stay to our little dance?

CALHOUN. I promised Bill to do that.

ANNETTE. Then everything is settled. Hurry!

SHIRLEY. Just a moment, Nan. Somebody on the rear driveway wants to speak to me—on important business.

ANNETTE. Well, I'll just come along—and we'll meet you in front, Captain. (*They pass out at R. U. E.* SHIRLEY turns and nods to CALHOUN, who bows gravely.)

Almost immediately JENNIE enters from R. C. CALHOUN nervously lights a cigarette and strolls to L. U. E. A sudden shriek breaks the stillness. He gazes into the gathering darkness, the cigarette drops from his fingers and he hurries back into the room. As he takes his hat which he has laid on table at C., JENNIE gasps and staggers towards him. He catches her as she faints.

CALHOUN (*looking helplessly at her*). Great heavens!

CURTAIN.

THE CAMOUFLAGE OF SHIRLEY

THE SECOND ACT.

SCENE: *A deserted cabin. Door R. of C., uncurtained window L. of C. at Back. Fireplace down L. Rough table in front of fireplace, with chair R. of table and a trifle up stage. Lamp and matches on table. Bench R. & E. Door down R.*

At rise, stage is in darkness and is clear. After a moment the door R. of C. is opened. SHIRLEY and ANNETTE are thrust inside the room and the door is violently slammed.

SHIRLEY (*as she shakes the door*). We're locked in!

ANNETTE (*hiding her face on SHIRLEY'S shoulder*). Oh, Shirley, Shirley! I'm frightened to death.

SHIRLEY. Where are we? (*They come to C.*)

ANNETTE. How should I know? Miles and miles from everybody.

SHIRLEY. And somewhere up a mountain side—

ANNETTE. With a dreadful man in a black mask to guard us. Oh, what does it all mean, Shirley?

SHIRLEY. That we have been kidnapped—*kidnapped*—just as surely as if we were living in the middle ages.

ANNETTE. But why?

SHIRLEY (*cautiously*). I'll answer that when I'm sure that we are—alone. (*Looks around.*)

ANNETTE. Oh, if Billy Joe were only here!

SHIRLEY. Well, he isn't, and we face the stern fact that we must depend upon our own wits.

ANNETTE (*sobbing*). Oh, I'm afraid—I'm afraid—

SHIRLEY (*shaking her*). Nan, are you a soldier's wife or just a helpless, clinging vine?

ANNETTE (*calming herself*). I'm a soldier's wife. Thank you for reminding me.

SHIRLEY. Now we'll investigate. I see a lamp over there and my Sherlock Holmes intuition tells me that where there is a lamp there are matches. (*They cross to table.*)

ANNETTE (*feeling*). A whole box—take one. (SHIRLEY lights lamp and stage is half illuminated.)

SHIRLEY. Attractive, isn't it? (*Looks around and goes to fireplace.*) And there are signs of life—cigar ashes, bits of paper, cigarette stubs. Evidently this is the Bandits' Retreat or the Den of Thieves.

ANNETTE (*swallowing hard*). Oh, Shirley!

SHIRLEY (*pointing to R.*). There's a door—suppose you investigate.

ANNETTE (*crossing slowly*). Perhaps there's been a murder—and—it's—*there!* (*Sinks on bench.*)

SHIRLEY. Nonsense. I'll look myself. (*Starts to door, hesitates, then seats herself by ANNETTE.*) But what's the use of being too curious!

ANNETTE (*looking nervously around*). We're alone. Now tell me what you promised.

SHIRLEY. You remember the man to whom I spoke this afternoon?

ANNETTE. Yes.

SHIRLEY. He is Captain Scheppel whom I met in Berlin. I recognized him immediately, and this pleasant little surprise party is to keep me safely hidden until he can make his escape.

ANNETTE. But why—take *me*?

SHIRLEY. You unfortunately happened to be along, my dear, and he couldn't gracefully get rid of you.

ANNETTE. Will he come—*here*?

SHIRLEY. I think he will. (*Silence for a few moments, then ANNETTE sniffs suspiciously.*) What's the matter, Nan?

ANNETTE. Nothing—nothing at all. I was just thinking about Billy Joe. Have you a handkerchief? I've lost mine.

SHIRLEY. I'm sure there's an extra one in my knitting bag. I'll look. (*Looks in her bag.*) Right on top. (*Hands handkerchief to ANNETTE.*)

ANNETTE (*apologetically*). I think I've taken a little cold. All this rain—and this chilly room—

SHIRLEY (*taking envelope from bag*). What's this—and how did it get there? (*Rises and goes to lamp, followed by ANNETTE.*)

ANNETTE. It's an official envelope.

SHIRLEY. So I see. (*Opens it.*) Apparently a code of some kind. Is it the one taken from your father's box, I wonder!

ANNETTE. Probably. But how did it get in your bag?

SHIRLEY. Evidently it's a trap. There's more at stake than I suspected—and this envelope must not fall into that man's hands. We can't destroy it—and it must not be found upon us. (*They cross to C.*)

ANNETTE. Then—hide it.

SHIRLEY. But where?

ANNETTE. Here. (*Looks around.*) Surely there's a place.

SHIRLEY. No, I think not. He's probably familiar with every crack and crevice.

ANNETTE. I'll slip it in my shoe.

SHIRLEY. No, you won't. It must not be upon either of us. I insist upon that.

ANNETTE. Slit the lining of your bag and drop it in.

SHIRLEY. That would show. (*Suddenly.*) But there's another way—why didn't I think of it before? (*Takes ball of yarn.*) In here!

ANNETTE. How?

SHIRLEY. Unwind it far enough to push in the envelope. (*Glancing over her shoulder at window.*) Come—let's move away from any possible spectator. (*Cross to R. U. E., where they unwind the yarn.*)

ANNETTE. Now that's enough. Hold it—so—and I can push—*this*—into the center. (*Hides envelope in ball of yarn.*)

SHIRLEY. The best kind of a hiding place, isn't it?

ANNETTE. And perfectly safe if you keep your knitting with you.

SHIRLEY. I won't do that—at first. He's clever—and he might suspect.

ANNETTE (*listening*). There's someone coming!

SHIRLEY *pushes ANNETTE on bench, hurries across to table, hanging the bag on the chair and leaning against the table. The door R. of C. at Back opens. CHARLTON enters, closes the door and stands with his back against it.*

SHIRLEY. Captain Scheppel! I thought so. Even with the mask I recognized you.

CHARLTON. Miss Carlisle is gifted with keen perceptions. (*Bows ironically.*)

SHIRLEY. And Captain Scheppel, like the country from which he comes, fails to realize that even through disguises a personality is discernible.

CHARLTON. You still persist in calling me Captain Scheppel?

SHIRLEY. Not at all. Why should the use of a rightful name be called persistency? *Charlton* is quite too American for you. (*Turns.*) You haven't met Mrs. Wayne, I believe. Nan, this is the host to whom you are indebted for this delightful surprise.

ANNETTE (*sarcastically*). So lovely to include me in your house party, Captain Scheppel. Your bungalow is charming.

SHIRLEY (*pointing to chair*). Won't you be seated? And shall I ring for tea?

CHARLTON. Miss Carlisle is inclined to be facetious.

SHIRLEY. Facetiousness, I fancy, is quite wasted upon one of your nationality.

CHARLTON (*curtly*). Let us leave my nationality, as you call it, wholly out of the question. (*Comes nearer to her.*)

SHIRLEY. In these days, Captain Scheppel, that is quite

impossible. (*Sharply.*) Come—this is all camouflage. Tell me, and tell me quickly, why you have subjected us to this insult.

CHARLTON. In time of war, unavoidable procedure is not necessarily an insult.

SHIRLEY. Indeed! As our respective countries have different standards of honor, the question is not worth the argument.

CHARLTON (*shrugging his shoulders*). Agreed. (*Returns to door.*)

SHIRLEY. Then, with such an admission, suppose you confess that you *are* Captain Scheppel.

CHARLTON. Of course I'm Captain Scheppel. Your amazingly good memory has caused me no little inconvenience.

SHIRLEY. Then it has not lived in vain.

CHARLTON. And had you been discreetly silent, you and your friend would not be—my guests—at the present moment.

SHIRLEY. It's a great experience.

CHARLTON (*bowing to ANNETTE*). And it has been thrust upon Mrs. Wayne. As a witness of our—departure, shall I say—it would have been extremely hazardous to leave her behind.

ANNETTE (*angrily*). Rather. By this time Billy Joe would have been on your trail and—

CHARLTON (*mockingly*). My dear young lady, do you really suppose that a little dog could prevent my escape?

ANNETTE (*rising*). A little dog! (*With dignity.*) I am speaking of my husband, Captain Scheppel.

CHARLTON (*bowing*). A thousand pardons! And yet I am still forced to say that even Lieutenant Wayne would have proved quite—harmless.

ANNETTE (*furiously*). Oh, would he? *Would* he? Do you realize, Captain Scheppel, that Lieutenant Wayne is a part of the biggest fighting machine in the world?

CHARLTON (*at C.*). Oh, the complacency and the ignorance of you Americans! Do you think that any feeble stroke of your country can stay for a moment the onward march of a nation entrusted by heaven with the true structure of human existence?

SHIRLEY (*crossing to him*). Stop right there! For I'm getting madder and madder every minute, and if I reach the boiling point—

CHARLTON (*checking her*). Pray don't, Miss Carlisle. You have both been so surprisingly tractable and docile—

SHIRLEY. When you expected weeping, wailing and hysteria? You don't know the American girl, Captain Scheppel.

CHARLTON. Perhaps I do not care to further the acquaintance.

SHIRLEY. Then in the face of such mutual hostility, suppose you open that door and let us go. (*Starts toward door.*)

CHARLTON (*blocking her way*). So that you can spread the alarm? Surely you do not credit me with so little discretion, Miss Carlisle. You should have acted this afternoon—when the opportunity was given you.

SHIRLEY. Unusual events—hindered—me. I regret it.

CHARLTON. And I am duly grateful. As it is, you will remain here until I have escaped from your shores.

ANNETTE. That is quite impossible. My husband and I are giving a little dance at nine—naturally, we must be excused.

CHARLTON (*sarcastically*). And that I should be the unwilling agent who thwarts such plans!

ANNETTE. You mean—

CHARLTON. I shall leave you here—later—and shall lock the door behind me. Unfortunately, there is but one car, and in my greater need I shall use it.

ANNETTE (*weakly*). We must stay here—all night? (*Sinks on bench.*)

CHARLTON. Unless you can break the lock—and find

your way. Remember, it is raining, it will be late, and if I am not mistaken, you have no idea of where you are.

SHIRLEY (*crossing to table and seating herself in chair*). Then for the present we accept your hospitality. I trust that you have provided amusement for the tedious wait.

CHARLTON (*at C.*). I try to be considerate of my guests. Accordingly, we shall first join in the game of—hunt the envelope!

SHIRLEY. I fear you must explain.

CHARLTON. I think not.

SHIRLEY. Please don't jest, Captain Scheppel. It's tiresome.

CHARLTON. Then hand me the document which is in your knitting bag.

SHIRLEY. I don't believe I understand you.

CHARLTON. I can put it in no simpler language. (*Comes to her.*)

SHIRLEY. What document?

CHARLTON. Look and see.

SHIRLEY. There is some ridiculous mistake. (*Takes her bag.*)

CHARLTON. Wait—let me investigate.

SHIRLEY (*handing him the bag*). Certainly. I prefer it. (*Hurries to ANNETTE.*)

CHARLTON (*after examining the contents*). It is not here. (*Crossing to SHIRLEY.*) You have it in your possession.

SHIRLEY. I don't like your tone.

CHARLTON. Nevertheless, I repeat that you have it in your possession.

SHIRLEY. I infer that this document is one whose contents would be beneficial to your country; whose loss would be detrimental to mine.

CHARLTON. Your inference is correct. Accordingly, any delay and subterfuge is useless.

SHIRLEY. I have no such paper. My word should be sufficient.

CHARLTON. But it is not.

SHIRLEY. Why should this envelope be in my bag?

CHARLTON. I saw it—dropped.

SHIRLEY. Saw it—dropped? Then—this afternoon.
(Suddenly.) Oh, I see! The foreign-looking waitress.
(At C.)

CHARLTON. Never mind *who*. The point is that you were to be the unconscious messenger.

SHIRLEY. Who has failed you. I realize your disappointment.

CHARLTON. You have not failed me—yet.

SHIRLEY. Perhaps someone else saw it change hands.

CHARLTON. No one—but myself.

SHIRLEY. Then it has undoubtedly been removed.

CHARLTON. By you.

SHIRLEY. Absurd!

CHARLTON. Or by some one who talked to you—afterwards.

SHIRLEY. A number of people talked to me—afterwards.

CHARLTON. You know what I mean. Someone who took the bag from you—or handed it to you. (*As SHIRLEY's expression changes.*) Ah, there was such a person.

SHIRLEY (*defiantly*). There was no such person.

CHARLTON (*seizing her hands*). Tell me the truth!

SHIRLEY. Then—listen! Do you think for a moment that if I had such a paper I'd hand it out to—you? A paper which would mean misfortune to my country? Why I've years and years of fighting ancestors back of me—men who strove for good, true things—and I've inherited some of their fighting spirit I hope. There's your answer, Captain Scheffel! (*Throws off his hands.*) Now, what are you going to do about it? (*Crosses to table and leans upon it.*)

Two short knocks, repeated three times are heard. Before one can answer, the knob is turned, the door opens and CALHOUN enters quickly, standing with his back against the door and leveling revolver. ANNETTE rises in agitation.

CALHOUN. Hands up, please! I'm from Kentucky—and I shoot—straight. (CHARLTON hesitates, then raises his hands.) Kindly remove any weapon which he may have, Miss Carlisle. (As SHIRLEY takes revolver from CHARLTON's pocket.) Hand it to me. (Takes revolver.) Thank you. Mine happens to be unloaded. (Turns to CHARLTON.) And now—Mr. Whoever-you-are, we'll listen to an explanation.

CHARLTON (*lowering his hands*). I fancy that any explanation will come—first—from you. (SHIRLEY withdraws to L.)

CALHOUN. As you wish. I happened to see your unexpected and unconventional departure, and as Mrs. Wayne's car was at hand, I followed. A puncture and unfamiliarity with the roads delayed me.

CHARLTON. Haven't you omitted—details? (Stands at L. of CALHOUN.)

CALHOUN. Perhaps I have, such as the temporary overthrow of your chauffeur. At present he is securely bound and quite speechless, after imparting to me the particular signal which would give me entrance. Two short knocks, repeated at intervals, three times. Could it by any chance stand for *Deutschland ueber alles*?

CHARLTON. Have you finished?

CALHOUN. Not quite. But the rest hardly concerns the ladies and it might not be pleasant for them to witness. (Turns to ANNETTE.) You will find the car at the first bend in the road, and the tracks are quite fresh enough to follow easily. Now—go. (ANNETTE hurries to door.)

SHIRLEY. Without you? Not a step.

ANNETTE. Don't be foolish, Shirley. Please think of Billy Joe and me.

SHIRLEY. I'm not thinking of anyone but Captain Calhoun.

CALHOUN. And Captain Calhoun prefers to be a free agent. Please don't argue the matter, but do as I say.

SHIRLEY. I don't take orders.

CALHOUN. But I give them—and I expect to be obeyed.

ANNETTE. Oh, Shirley—Shirley! Come, *come!* (*Goes to her.*)

SHIRLEY (*coming to chair*). Do you know who this man is? He is Captain Scheppel of the German army.

CALHOUN (*whistling*). Oh, I see! The situation grows in interest, and perhaps if left to ourselves, Captain Scheppel will explain his purpose in coming to this particular part of the Atlantic coast. It may be that this is the very mountain from which the signals have been flashed.

CHARLTON (*threateningly*). Who are you?

CALHOUN. An American soldier on his way to Berlin.

CHARLTON. Indeed! Sometimes a destination is never reached.

CALHOUN. And often a seemingly successful mission—fails.

CHARLTON. These are days in which it is safer for one not to interfere with affairs that do not concern him. (*Crosses back of SHIRLEY to back of table.*)

CALHOUN. But if they *do* concern him?

CHARLTON. We are wasting time. You must confess that your presence here, unsolicited, is a mistake—and that you have no right—

CALHOUN (*coolly*). Oh, haven't I? Mrs. Wayne is the wife of my friend; Miss Carlisle is my fiancée. When they leave us I'll thrash you within an inch of your life for daring to lay a finger upon them.

CHARLTON. They haven't left us—yet.

CALHOUN. What do you mean?

CHARLTON (*as he takes revolver from table drawer and*

levels it). That I hold the last trick, after all. (ANNETTE *runs to bench*.) The revolver in your hand, Captain Calhoun, is also unloaded. *This* is the one which I keep for emergencies. So—for the present—I shall ask the ladies to be seated.

ANNETTE (*hysterically*). I won't be seated. I won't stay. (*Sits*.)

(CALHOUN *examines the revolver which he holds, finds that it is empty, throws it down and starts to CHARLTON*.)

CHARLTON (*holding up hand*). Just a moment, please. Before we begin hostilities, I must make a final request of Miss Carlisle and remind her that much depends upon her compliance with it.

CALHOUN. Very well—speak out.

CHARLTON. Miss Carlisle—understands. Accordingly, let her hand over the envelope.

SHIRLEY. I have no envelope to give you.

CHARLTON (*ironically*). I notice that Miss Carlisle always answers my questions evasively. Her regard for absolute truth is praiseworthy.

SHIRLEY. Truth is hardly the weapon to use in fighting you, Captain Scheppel. (*Seats herself in chair*.)

CALHOUN. Shirley, what is this paper?

SHIRLEY. A mysterious something concerning which Captain Scheppel has been rather non-committal.

CALHOUN. How did it come into your possession?

SHIRLEY. Captain Scheppel says that it was dropped into my knitting bag. By one of his agents, I presume.

CHARLTON. You understand now, Captain Calhoun, my interest in Miss Carlisle.

CALHOUN. But I don't understand why she should be brought—here.

SHIRLEY. I can answer that. This afternoon I recognized Captain Scheppel as an officer whom I had met in Berlin some time ago. Naturally, it is to his advantage to

keep me in seclusion until he can make his escape, and, quite unconsciously, I have become a party to an international situation.

CALHOUN. It is quite possible that the document may have been removed by a third person.

CHARLTON. Exactly. Miss Carlisle admitted that there was a third person.

SHIRLEY. I admitted nothing of the sort.

CHARLTON. Your denial was so emphatic that it was equivalent to an admission.

CALHOUN. Well—I was the third person. As I handed the knitting bag to Miss Carlisle, it was very easy for me to extract the envelope. (CHARLTON *crosses back of SHIRLEY to left of CALHOUN.*)

CHARLTON. It would have been easy—but it *wasn't*. Your bluff won't work.

CALHOUN. What do you mean?

CHARLTON. That experience has made me a judge of human nature. You never saw that envelope, Captain Calhoun.

CALHOUN. Nor did Miss Carlisle.

CHARLTON. It will take time to convince me of that. (*Crosses back of CALHOUN and stands by door.*)

CALHOUN. Shirley? (*Goes to her.*)

SHIRLEY. Yes.

CALHOUN. Such a document would be much safer in the hands of a representative of the government. Do you understand what I mean?

SHIRLEY. Perfectly. And I agree.

CHARLTON. And I also understand. Let me warn you that my eyes are quite keen enough to detect any transfer.

SHIRLEY (*sarcastically*). Then we shall not be inconsiderate enough to force any strain upon your eyesight. Suppose we make ourselves comfortable, since our stay here seems a trifle—uncertain.

ANNETTE (*shuddering*). Comfortable! Here? (*Glaring at CHARLTON.*) With *him*? (*Rushing to CALHOUN and seizing his arm.*) Oh, Captain Calhoun, save us—for Billy Joe's sake—save us!

CALHOUN. My dear Mrs. Bill, that's exactly what I'm going to do.

SHIRLEY. Aren't you ashamed, Nan? You should be sufficiently thankful to know that Clay is with us.

ANNETTE. Clay! *Clay*! Anyone would think he was the whole United States army! And he's not a bit more important than Billy Joe!

SHIRLEY. Then I wouldn't hold on to him so vigorously.

ANNETTE (*dropping his arm*). Billy Joe is perfectly raving crazy by this time. He probably thinks that you have run off with me.

CALHOUN. Nice, trusting husband!

SHIRLEY. And why should my fiancé be your running mate?

ANNETTE. It's all your fault, Shirley. If you hadn't made me go with you to that old car—

SHIRLEY. *Made* you! You suggested it yourself.

ANNETTE. Well, you were my guest and if I hadn't been polite—

SHIRLEY. I'd have been here—by myself. *That* would have been lovely.

ANNETTE. *Clay* would have been with you. (*Crossing to bench.*)

SHIRLEY. Pussy! Pussy!

CHARLTON. The atmosphere seems a little charged. Suppose we change the subject. (*ANNETTE reseats herself on bench.*)

SHIRLEY. Suppose we do. I'm curious to know just what you intend to do, now that Captain Calhoun is added to our house party.

CHARLTON. The arrival of Captain Calhoun makes no change in my plans.

SHIRLEY. Really! Some way I can't quite picture his being locked in.

CALHOUN. Nor can I. (*As CHARLTON takes out his watch and looks at it.*) Social engagement? Don't let us keep you?

CHARLTON. Not until seven thirty. And you're not keeping me, my dear fellow.

CALHOUN. As an interested witness of your little drama, may I inquire just what is to happen at seven thirty?

CHARLTON. Wouldn't it be better to—wait and see?

CALHOUN. Perhaps the lights go on.

CHARLTON. Just what do you mean by that—and exactly how much do you know?

CALHOUN. Wouldn't it be better to—wait and see?

ANNETTE (*snappily to CHARLTON.*) What time is it?

CHARLTON. Seven fifteen by the clock—and all's well.

ANNETTE. Don't say that to me—don't you dare. Seven fifteen! Why it's dinner time—and Billy Joe is sitting there all by himself.

SHIRLEY. If he is no more excited than that, he deserves to lose his wife.

ANNETTE. Shirley Carlisle! You know he's hunting for me this very minute—perfectly raving crazy because he can't find me.

SHIRLEY. That was my supposition, naturally. It was you who put him into that quiet domestic setting.

ANNETTE (*hysterically*). How do you know where Billy Joe is, Shirley? How do—

SHIRLEY (*interrupting*). Get out your knitting, Nan. It will calm your nerves. (*Takes out her knitting.* ANNETTE *reluctantly follows suit.*) Anyway, it isn't right for us to waste time when the fine, brave men who are making the world safe for democracy need our help.

CHARLTON. Miss Carlisle is optimistic.

SHIRLEY. Not at all. The American woman has the

vision, that's all—and she tries to make herself worth fighting for.

CALHOUN (*bending forward and speaking earnestly*). And you are worth fighting for. (SHIRLEY *lays down her knitting for a moment and looks steadily at him.*)

CHARLTON. A thin, weak line of khaki! (*Snaps his fingers.*) Bah!

CALHOUN. But quite powerful enough to check an insidious poisonous line of Kultur.

CHARLTON. And what do you Americans know of—Kultur?

CALHOUN. Not much—thank heaven! You see, we haven't been trained to make war upon women and children, to regard promises as mere scraps of paper, and to believe that might makes right. (*Stands by SHIRLEY.*)

CHARLTON. The colossal ignorance of your people would be laughable if it were not lamentable. Who is to save a decadent world if not the nation to which is given the strength, the power and the will to enforce its civilization? The end is worth the struggle—even if millions of us die for it.

CALHOUN (*after a pause*). I'm sorry for you, Scheppel, honestly sorry. For if you are called upon to give your life for your country, you die in vain; and if such an honor comes to me, I shall be happy in knowing that I have contributed in part toward a world peace, a world safety and a world happiness. That's the difference between us.

CHARLTON. A difference which can never be bridged by argument. (*Takes out watch.*) Miss Carlisle, may I warn you that time is passing?

ANNETTE. What time is it?

CHARLTON. Almost time for the curtain to go down.

SHIRLEY (*dropping her ball of yarn*). There goes my ball—get it, Clay. (*As CHARLTON makes an involuntary movement.*) Of course, Captain Scheppel, even gallantry must play a secondary rôle to vigilance—therefore I can't expect you to go down on your knees for it.

CHARLTON. That's my misfortune. Let us hope that when war times are over, I may have just such a privilege.

ANNETTE. Let us hope that we'll never see you again!

(CALHOUN *returns ball of yarn to SHIRLEY.*)

SHIRLEY (*sighing*). Men are so stupid!

CHARLTON (*quickly*). Apropos of what is that remark?

SHIRLEY (*glancing at CALHOUN*). Apropos of a ball of yarn.

CHARLTON (*shrugging his shoulders*). Your conversation grows erratic.

SHIRLEY. And my nerves are on edge. No wonder, with that old pistol glaring at me! (*Drops ball again.*) Dear me—that ball has fallen again, Clay.

CALHOUN (*returning it*). Why not drop it in the bag? Then it will stay put. (*Stands at her right.*)

SHIRLEY. I don't want it in the bag—it's liable to get a germ from that dreadful envelope which Captain Scheppel says was hidden there. (*Significantly.*) Have you forgotten the envelope?

CALHOUN. No, I've not forgotten the envelope.

CHARLTON. Nor have I.

SHIRLEY. I wonder what mysterious thing it contains—perhaps a love letter.

CHARLTON. Perhaps.

SHIRLEY. Do you remember what we said about love letters this afternoon, Clay? (*Holds up ball of yarn and pretends to shake the yarn loose.*)

CALHOUN (*suddenly understanding*). Yes—I remember.

SHIRLEY. Or perhaps it's just a plain old stupid state document.

CALHOUN. Do you remember what we said about state documents this afternoon, Shirley?

SHIRLEY. Of course I remember, you stupid thing. You are stupid, aren't you, Clay?

CALHOUN. Not any more.

ANNETTE. I never heard such silly talk. (*To CHARLTON.*) What time is it?

CALHOUN (*glancing at watch*). Ask me for a change. Past the half hour. Now, what's going to happen?

SHIRLEY (*bending over her knitting*). Something wrong here. Let's see. (*Counts.*) One—two—three—(*gently shows the ball from her lap.*) Oh, dear—I didn't mean to do that again, Clay.

CALHOUN (*as he picks it up*). Well, I'll hold it to avoid future exertion. Shall I loosen it just as you need it? (*Stands down stage at end of table.*)

SHIRLEY. Unwind it until I tell you to stop. (*He unwinds it rapidly.*) For it doesn't take long to knit it up.

CHARLTON. Better save some for the night watches.

SHIRLEY. Sorry, but we can't stay that long, Captain Scheppel. We're due at a dance—aren't we, Nan?

ANNETTE. Rather. What time is it, Captain Scheppel?

SHIRLEY (*noting that CALHOUN's fingers touch the envelope*). Oh-h-h! I've dropped a stitch. (*Rushes toward lamp and stands between CHARLTON and CALHOUN until the latter extracts the envelope and hides it*). Oh, I beg your pardon, Captain. I didn't realize I had come between you and your prisoner. (*Seats herself.*)

CHARLTON. My prisoner seems quite reconciled to his surroundings. I understand—for the first time—how one can be caught by a ball of yarn.

SHIRLEY. Oh—*do* you? I wonder if you realize just which one is caught.

ANNETTE. And I wonder if you heard me, Captain Scheppel, when I asked you the time.

The door R. of C. at Back opens suddenly. JENNIE, in a long coat, drenched with rain and carrying a dark lantern, enters. As if blinded by the light, she leans against the wall, hides her eyes and throws back the hood of her coat. ANNETTE rises in fright. SHIRLEY crosses and stands by her.

JENNIE. It was so terrible—up there—the wind—the rain—the cold—and the stillness. But I flashed the signal—and there was no answer.

CHARLTON. No answer? There must have been an answer.

JENNIF (*dully*). No answer.

CHARLTON. Are you sure?

JENNIE. I saw nothing, I tell you—nothing. There was only the rain—and the cold—and the wind—and someway—I don't know how—I came here.

CHARLTON. Then you have failed.

JENNIE. Failed? (*Exultantly*.) I have succeeded.

CHARLTON. What do you mean?

JENNIE (*again in apathetic tones*). That I have obeyed instructions.

CALHOUN. So you were instructed to fall into my arms at the crucial moment, were you?

JENNIE. That was my own scheme. A delay was necessary.

ANNETTE. And you were instructed to pass a note to Neil Rutherford, were you?

JENNIE (*haughtily*). That is my own affair.

CHARLTON (*seizing her arm*). Who is this man Rutherford and what right—

JENNIE (*throwing off his hands*). Don't speak to me of right. I'm through with your tasks and your humiliations; I'm done with deceit and evasion; I'm free to follow the flag of the land I love. And this moment is worth the sacrifice—for my triumph means your failure; my success is bought with your misfortune; and the beginning of my career marks the end of your plans, your hopes and your ambitions. (*Turns quickly, goes to the window, and raises and lowers her lantern three times.*)

CHARLTON (*off his guard*). What are you doing?

As he turns, CALHOUN, who has been waiting his opportunity, springs upon him and twists his arm until the revolver falls upon the floor. As they struggle, JENNIE turns out the lamp, the door R. of C. at Back opens and RUTHERFORD appears with leveled weapon.

RUTHERFORD. In the name of the law!

CURTAIN.

THE CAMOUFLAGE OF SHIRLEY

THE THIRD ACT.

SCENE: *Sun parlor in the RICHMOND home. Entrances L. and at R. of C. at Back. Another door at L. C. Through door L. of C. at Back dancing room may be seen. French window at R., showing landscape beyond. Small stand with telephone at extreme lower L. Telephone chair. Settee down stage, a little L. of C. Tall lamp with flowered shade at L. U. E. Palms between the two doors at Back and down R. Large chair down R. Flags, red, white and blue electric lights, and rugs for floor. Furniture should be wicker.*

Curtain rises on MRS. RICHMOND and WAYNE standing up C., MRS. RICHMOND at WAYNE's right. They are conversing with RUTH and HAL, who stand at their right. NELL and WALTER are standing down L.

RUTH. But, Mrs. Richmond, we saw them as late as six o'clock, and they said nothing about any motor trip.

MRS. R. Naturally they didn't. They probably hadn't thought of it. Did you ever know Shirley Carlisle to do anything upon mature reflection? Of course it was she who influenced Nan.

NELL. But it was raining.

MRS. R. Also thundering and lightning. And Nan was in her trousseau clothes. (*Glancing at WAYNE.*) I'm duly thankful it is no longer my duty to replace them.

HAL. Bad tire, I suppose.

MRS. R. A puncture every mile, I think—and in all this storm. No wonder they were delayed—and no wonder they were bedraggled. Fortunately, this is an informal dance, otherwise their failure to greet you would be inexcusable.

WALTER. Pretty tough on you, Mrs. Richmond—all this wait and this anxiety.

MRS. R. I expected it. Shirley always celebrates her arrival by some excitement. Last year she swam beyond her depth and had to be rescued.

HAL. Why weren't you along, Bill?

WAYNE (*hesitating*). Well—you see—

MRS. R. (*hastily*). William has military duties with which pleasure cannot interfere.

WALTER. Didn't you have any intimation of the trip?

WAYNE. Well, I—

MRS. R. (*interrupting*). William couldn't be reached at the time of departure.

NELL (*as the music behind the scene starts*). Oh—there goes the music—and it's one of those ripping military tunes. Let's not lose a moment of it. (*NELL and WALTER dance off stage at door L. of C. at Back.*)

HAL (*to RUTH*). Shall we follow suit?

RUTH. Of course. (*Turns to WAYNE as they dance by.*) Better go yourself, Billy Joe, on the next motor trip! (*Exit RUTH and HAL through door L. of C. at Back.*)

MRS. R. Now—did you hear what she said?

WAYNE. Ruth didn't mean a thing in the world by that.

MRS. R. Nevertheless, after tonight, people will be wondering why a bride of two weeks goes on a motor trip without her husband.

WAYNE. Then why did you start this silly story about a motor trip? It would have been better and wiser to tell the truth.

MRS. R. *The truth?* Say that my daughter and her friend were vulgarly kidnapped by a German spy, taken to a deserted cabin and figured in what I call a common shooting affray? *Never!*

WAYNE. I don't understand why—

MRS. R. No, William, I don't expect you to understand. You haven't realized in what agony of soul I have greeted these people, explaining to each one just why my daughter and the guest of honor are unavoidably delayed, and how sorry I am that my husband is so engaged with government affairs that he can spare no time to his family. (*Sharply.*) William, who is that strange, foreign looking creature and why should Mr. Richmond give up this party just to talk to her?

WAYNE (*patiently*). Someone connected with government affairs. The girls said they would explain.

MRS. R. And who is this Captain Calhoun?

WAYNE. My college friend—and Shirley's fiancé.

MRS. R. Fiddlesticks! I don't believe a word of it. Shirley is always leading Nan into some sort of a scrape.

WAYNE (*resentfully*). Nan isn't so easily led. She has a mind of her own.

MRS. R. (*crushingly*). Who has lived longer with Nan—you or I?

WAYNE. No one understands Nan as I do.

MRS. R. Don't talk nonsense, William. No man ever understands a woman—least of all the one who marries her.

WAYNE (*moving to L.*). Can't I go now? I haven't seen Nan but a moment—and—

MRS. R. (*catching his arm*). Go? Not until all the guests arrive. Not that you've been any help, for I've had all the talking to do.

WAYNE. But think of all the worry and anxiety I've had over Nan's absence.

MRS. R. I'm not thinking of *you* at all, William. I'm considering what people will say. (MARY, LOU and JACK appear at door R. of C. at Back.) Now here comes somebody. Do try to look pleasant or it will be reported that young Wayne and his wife are on the verge of a divorce. (*As MARY LOU and JACK advance to them.*) Oh, my dear, how good to see you!

MARY LOU (*as she shakes hands*). Are we so late that the girls have left the receiving line? I'm dreadfully sorry—but we had a puncture.

MRS. R. Don't mention punctures—for we've had almost a tragedy right here. What do you suppose happened to those foolish girls? They went motoring with Captain Calhoun—Shirley's fiancé, you know—lost their way, had all kinds of accidents with the car and have just now arrived. They're dressing and will soon be down. (*As MARY LOU passes on to WAYNE.*) Good evening, Mr. Miller, so happy to see you. (*Passes him on to WAYNE.*)

JACK (*as he shakes WAYNE's hand*). Heavens, man, you don't look like a happy bridegroom. What sort of encouragement do you suppose you give the rest of us who have matrimonial intentions?

MRS. R. William is very tired for military duties *are* irksome.

JACK. Didn't know that you had any military duties at present.

MRS. R. Oh, *didn't* you? Now you two hurry right along so that you won't miss any more of the dancing. (*MARY LOU and JACK pass out at door L. of C. at Back. As ROSE and BOB appear at door R. of C. at Back, she turns sharply to WAYNE.*) Smile! (*As ROSE greets her.*) Oh, my dear—how good to see you! I'm sorry the girls aren't here to greet you, but what do you suppose has happened? They went motoring with Captain Calhoun—Shirley's fiancé, you know—lost their way, had all kinds of accidents with the car, and have just now arrived. They're dressing and will soon be down. (*Looks inquiringly at BOB.*)

ROSE (*hastily*). My friend, Mr. Bartlett, Mrs. Richmond. I took the liberty of bringing him tonight. (*Passes on to WAYNE.*)

BOB (*as he greets MRS. RICHMOND*). Hope you don't mind, Mrs. Richmond. Tomorrow I'm leaving for the training camp—and—well—Miss Ross has been taking something of an interest in me—and—

MRS. R. (*effusively*). Any friend of Miss Ross is very welcome here.

WAYNE (*as he shakes Bob's hand*). What a fortunate fellow you are, Bartlett. Rose has adopted three soldiers already, and will know just how to treat a fourth.

BOB (*joining ROSE at WAYNE's left*). You didn't tell me that you had three others on the string.

ROSE. Why should I? They're just adopted—and you—well—that's different—and—(*turning to WAYNE as they pass out*) you make me tired, Billy Joe. (*To BOB.*) Shall we go on to the dancing, Bob? (*Coquettishly.*) You don't mind if I call you—Bob—do you? (*Exeunt door L. of C. at Back.*)

MRS. R. Surely no others will come. (*As BETTINA tiptoes in timidly from L.*) Why, Bettina!

BETTINA. Nan sent me.

MRS. R. (*sternly*). You should be in bed.

BETTINA. But I've been helping the girls to dress.

MRS. R. Why did Nan send you?

BETTINA. She wants Billy Joe!

MRS. R. William can't go.

WAYNE. But William will. (*Turns and dashes out of the room at door L. C.*)

MRS. R. (*as she gazes angrily after him*). Why doesn't Nan hurry? All these people in the other room and no hostess—

BETTINA. That's just it. She wants you there until she can come.

MRS. R. (*sighing*). Oh, very well! (*As she starts across and up L.*) Bettina, is that strange girl still talking to your father?

BETTINA. Dad's gone.

MRS. R. *Gone?*

BETTINA. To Washington. He left a note for you.

MRS. R. (*seizing BETTINA's arm*). Did—*she*—go with him?

BETTINA (*wriggling loose*). Of course not. She is with the girls now, and she is coming to the party.

MRS. R. So *that* is what Nan is planning. Well, she is *not* coming to the party.

BETTINA. But mother—

MRS. R. (*sternly*). Bettina, go to bed.

BETTINA. She has little crowns embroidered on her handkerchiefs.

MRS. R. What's—what's that?

BETTINA. And she is somebody awfully important in France.

MRS. R. Are you sure of this?

BETTINA. Oh, yes. And she has a château all her very own.

MRS. R. Dear me! How interesting!

BETTINA. And mother—she is a secret agent!

MRS. R. *What?*

BETTINA. A secret agent for Dad!

MRS. R. So *that* explains it!

BETTINA. And—oh, mother—she worked for a German spy, too—and the German never knew that she was finding out all these wonderful things for Dad.

MRS. R. (*excitedly*). Tell them all to hurry. Be a good little girl, Betty dear, and go to bed. (*Kisses her.*)

(*As MRS. RICHMOND goes out at door L. of C. at Back, BETTINA hurries to door at L. C.*)

BETTINA (*calls*). Shirley?

Enter SHIRLEY at L. C.

SHIRLEY. Everybody out of the way? Good for you, Betty. (*Goes to telephone.*)

BETTINA (*following her*). Why, Shirley, you have on your bedroom slippers.

SHIRLEY (*seating herself at telephone*). So I have. Well, when one is walking on air she doesn't think of shoes. Be a good kid and get my others for me. (*Exit BETTINA at L. C. SHIRLEY takes down receiver.*) Long distance, please—Long distance?—Get me Plaza 6000—and get it quickly. This is Mr. Richmond's wire—I have government business—and it's very necessary that I be connected immediately. Thank you. (*Puts up receiver.*)

Enter BETTINA at L. C. with slippers, handkerchief and pin.

SHIRLEY. That's dear of you, Betty. Now put them on, won't you? (*As BETTINA puts on the slippers.*) How I wish they were seven league boots!

BETTINA (*sitting on floor*). Where would you go?

SHIRLEY. To France.

BETTINA. Alone?

SHIRLEY (*thoughtfully*). I'm—not—quite—sure.

BETTINA. Here's your handkerchief, too. (*Hands it to her.*)

SHIRLEY (*as she takes it*). Thanks again. I'll need it, for I expect to weep out my eyes tonight.

BETTINA. Oh—Shirley! The Captain? (*SHIRLEY nods.*) Oh, is it so bad as all that?

SHIRLEY. It's pretty bad.

BETTINA. Here's your service pin. (*Hands it to her.*)

SHIRLEY (*pinning it on*). How could I forget it? After all it's done for me. (*Telephone rings. She muffles the sound.*) Now, Betty, if you want to do your bit for the country, don't let anybody in this room. (*BETTINA rises and tiptoes to door L. of C. at Back. As SHIRLEY's conversation proceeds, she listens eagerly, comes closer and closer until, as SHIRLEY hangs up the receiver, she is standing back of settee.*) Yes?—Yes?—Very well—Hello, Dad, did I wake you up?—What's that?—I'm not in any scrape I'll have you know.—I'm just breaking some news to you.—I'm going to France—to drive an ambulance.—Why, Dad, I never heard such language.—Didn't you tell me that I could go if I'd

marry a soldier who would take me?—You did, too—don't try to get out of it.—I've found the soldier, that's all—and you're to pull every string you have on the war department to get me a passport.—Dad, I've always had my own way and this is the only big thing I've ever asked you.—He's wonderful—and he is the only man in the world who can manage me.—*What?* I don't think that's nice to say.—Don't be so eloquent—remember we pay for extra time.—I—*we*—will probably arrive on the noon train.—Will explain then.—I can't say his name over the telephone.—Well—because he hasn't asked me yet—but I think he will—Good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver.*)

BETTINA. Shirley, I don't quite know whether you are engaged or not.

SHIRLEY. I don't quite know myself, Betty.

BETTINA. How can you be engaged to the Captain if you're expecting somebody else to ask you?

SHIRLEY. Somebody else?

BETTINA. Yes—the somebody who is taking you to France.

SHIRLEY (*reprovingly*). You listened, Betty.

BETTINA (*coming slowly around settee*). I couldn't help it. How can you, Shirley? (*Seats herself on arm of settee.*)

SHIRLEY. You wouldn't understand.

BETTINA. Oh, yes I would. I'm old enough for *that*.

SHIRLEY. Well, I'm engaged but I'm not legally engaged.

BETTINA (*eagerly*). What would make it—legal?

SHIRLEY. The Captain's keen perception of existing conditions.

BETTINA (*after a pause*). Say that again.

SHIRLEY. The Captain's keen perception of existing conditions.

BETTINA (*repeating*). The—Captain's—keen—perception of—existing—conditions.

SHIRLEY (*laughing*). You funny youngster. (*Hands BETTINA the bedroom slippers.*) Now, run along and tell Nan to come.

BETTINA (*slowly making her way to door at L. C. and peeping out*). She's coming now. (*Exit at L. C.*)

Enter ANNETTE from L. C. SHIRLEY meets her at C.

ANNETTE. Billy Joe says for us to tell everybody to-night. It's only fair to Jeanne. (*Hides her head on SHIRLEY's shoulder.*) Oh, Shirley—I can't even *think*, so much has happened. And I can never forget that terrible ride—when Neil shot him as he tried to escape.

SHIRLEY. Neil had to shoot him, Nan. Can't you understand? And he isn't badly wounded.

ANNETTE. But he's caught!

SHIRLEY. You wouldn't want an enemy of our country—at liberty, would you? (*ANNETTE shakes her head.*) Come—tell me the rest of her story—quickly—before we go in—*there*. (*Points to ballroom.*)

ANNETTE (*drawing SHIRLEY down by her on settee*). She knew Scheppel to be a clever agent, represented herself as a traitor to her country and surrendered certain papers of supposed value to France. He took her into his employ, forcing her to obtain from Dad various documents whose contents he signalled to the submarine.

SHIRLEY. And of course this information, while it seemed authentic, really varied enough from the true facts to prove valueless to the enemy.

ANNETTE. Exactly.

SHIRLEY. Then why hasn't he been seized before this?

ANNETTE. The war department has been waiting for a certain document supposed to be in his possession. The supposition was verified today and the arrest was to have been made tonight when he signalled. Your unexpected arrival changed all plans.

Enter JENNIE at L. C.

SHIRLEY. Clay also caused some excitement, I fancy.

JENNIE. Rather. (*Crosses and stands back of settee.*) If I had succeeded in keeping him away, everything would have soon been over. As it was—I was forced to play my part to the end. (*Lightly as she looks around.*) And to think that I should be a guest in the very home from which I have carefully abstracted the state papers which were just as carefully laid out for me.

ANNETTE. You've been wonderful, Jeanne, wonderful—and now you are going to forget it all. (*Rises, takes JENNIE's hand and starts up L.*) Come!

SHIRLEY (*rising and detaining JENNIE*). Tell me—just one more thing.

JENNIE. Well?

SHIRLEY. About the envelope.

JENNIE. It contained a worthless code and a false message.

ANNETTE. Then we might have been shot for a scrap of paper—(*looking at SHIRLEY*) thanks to Clay!

SHIRLEY. On the other hand we are here safe and sound—(*imitating ANNETTE*) thanks to Clay.

Enter MRS. RICHMOND, door L. of C. at Back.

ANNETTE (*leading JENNIE forward*). Mother, our guest, Mademoiselle Dupriez. (*They stand at MRS. RICHMOND's right, SHIRLEY at her left.*)

MRS. R. (*as she takes JENNIE's hand*). So glad to welcome you, my dear, but America is always glad to welcome France.

JENNIE. I'm half American myself—for my mother was a Virginian and I was educated here.

MRS. R. Then we are all the prouder to claim you. (*Turns.*) Come—our friends are waiting—and—

Enter RUTHERFORD and RUTH at door L. of C. at Back.

RUTH (*advancing and leaving RUTHERFORD up L.*). Have you heard? Have you seen? And do you know that

Neil is in khaki? He's been so much the center of attraction that he is beginning to feel like the only soldier in captivity.

SHIRLEY (*going to RUTHERFORD*). We knew all about the khaki—before it happened. (*Takes his hand.*)

ANNETTE (*waving her hand*). Splendid, isn't it?

MRS. R. And next to Mademoiselle Dupriez, Neil, you are the lion of the evening. First honors must go to her. Now, girls, this time we'll go—

RUTHERFORD. May I detain Jeanne just a moment? I promise it won't be long.

MRS. R. Then keep your promise. (*Exeunt MRS. RICHMOND, SHIRLEY and ANNETTE at door L. of C. at Back as RUTHERFORD advances to JENNIE and RUTH.*)

RUTH (*to JENNIE*). We've just been talking of you—everybody's talking of you—and I want to be the very first to tell you how splendid I think you are. (*Excitedly.*) Was there a secret mission from France?

JENNIE. There was.

RUTH (*laughingly*). And did you go over to the Kaiser?

JENNIE (*laying her hand on RUTHERFORD'S arm*). I went over to—Neil!

RUTH. And that's why it was all so mysterious?

JENNIE. That's why. You can see that it was much better to drop out of existence—temporarily.

RUTH (*enthusiastically*). A secret mission for France—a secret service man of America—and they all lived happily ever after!

Enter HAL at door L. of C. at Back.

HAL. Our dance.

RUTH. Coming. (*Exeunt RUTH and HAL at door L. of C. at Back.*)

(*JENNIE walks slowly to chair at R. 2 E. and seats herself.*)

RUTHERFORD. I'm in khaki, Jeanne, at last. (*Stands at her left.*)

JENNIE. To me—you have always been in khaki.

RUTHERFORD. Are you satisfied with only a private?

JENNIE. *Only* a private? I remember that my private has met the foes of misunderstanding and criticism; that he has already risked his life for the cause.

RUTHERFORD. And now fights in the open.

JENNIE. For France!

RUTHERFORD (*sitting on arm of chair*). For you!

(*From behind the scenes come the first strains of the "Marseillaise."*)

JENNIE. Four years since that day in Paris, Neil—and now—

RUTHERFORD. You are under the Stars and Stripes, and I am on my way to France—to be one, I trust, of the smiling, heroic, undaunted men who guard the City Beautiful and say—even in the face of death—*They shall not pass!*

JENNIE (*rising as she hears the music*). Listen! The call of France! And America has answered.

RUTHERFORD (*rising*). Even as France answered us so long ago. It's a song of victory, Jeanne, and though sometimes we cannot hear it for the cannon's roar, we know that it will ring out triumphantly for Right, for Truth, for Liberty—on the day we win!

Enter RUTH at door L. of C. at Back.

RUTH. They are playing—and waiting—for you—both! (*Holds out her hands.*) Won't you come? (*Exeunt RUTHERFORD, JENNIE, RUTH at door L. of C. at Back.*)

CALHOUN *enters at door L. of C. at Back and stands with back to audience until the strains of the "Marseillaise" die away. In the meantime, BETTINA has entered at L. C. As she sees CALHOUN she hesitates and tiptoes to right of room. He turns, seats himself on settee without seeing her. After a moment she coughs apologetically. He rises hastily.*

BETTINA. I'm—I'm Bettina.

CALHOUN (*gravely*). I'm very glad to meet you, Bettina. (*Bows.*)

BETTINA (*curtseying*). And I'm very glad to meet you, soldier man.

CALHOUN. I'm not intruding, am I?

BETTINA. Oh, no. You see I'm not old enough to go to the party.

CALHOUN. Then I'll be a bit of the party and come to you.

BETTINA. I was looking for Shirley's Captain.

CALHOUN. Shirley's Captain? And what do you want with Shirley's Captain?

BETTINA. I just wanted to see him.

CALHOUN. And why?

BETTINA. Because he's a real hero.

CALHOUN. Won't I do just as well?

BETTINA (*gravely*). Yes—I think you will.

CALHOUN (*indicating settee*). Then, won't you be seated?

BETTINA. You don't mind? (*Curls herself up at right of settee.*)

CALHOUN. On the other hand, I'm delighted. I'm feeling a bit blue and need cheering up. (*Sits by her.*)

BETTINA. Shirley's blue, too.

CALHOUN. How do you know?

BETTINA. She said she expected to weep out her eyes tonight.

CALHOUN. For what?

BETTINA. For the Captain.

CALHOUN. What has the Captain done?

BETTINA. I don't know. But she said it was pretty bad. (*Pauses.*) Are you on your way to France?

CALHOUN. Yes.

BETTINA. To fight?

CALHOUN. To fight—so that little girls like you may be—safe.

BETTINA. Shirley's going to France, too.

CALHOUN (*sharply*). Who's going with her?

BETTINA. Some man.

CALHOUN. *What* man?

BETTINA. I don't know.

CALHOUN. Is—is it the Captain?

BETTINA. No. You see she's not—legally—engaged to the Captain.

CALHOUN. Oh—*isn't* she?

BETTINA (*leaning forward*). But I know what will make the engagement—*legal*.

CALHOUN (*eagerly*). Tell me.

BETTINA (*importantly*). The Captain's keen perception of existing conditions.

CALHOUN (*looking away*). Who told you to repeat that?

BETTINA. Nobody. I heard Shirley say it.

CALHOUN. What did she mean? (*Turns.*)

BETTINA. I don't know. (*Sighs.*) Sometimes I don't quite understand Shirley.

CALHOUN. Neither do I.

BETTINA (*in surprise*). Oh—do *you* know her?

CALHOUN. Just—slightly.

BETTINA. And have you met the Captain?

CALHOUN. Yes—I've met him.

BETTINA. Is he so very wonderful?

CALHOUN. He's a short-sighted, blundering, block-headed idiot!

BETTINA (*after a pause*). I thought only ladies said things about each other.

CALHOUN. That was a great mistake on my part, Bettina, and I apologize. (*Leans to her.*) Now tell me something else. Do you think Shirley likes the Captain?

BETTINA. I *know* she likes the other one.

CALHOUN (*blankly*). Oh—you *do*.

BETTINA. The one who is going to take her to France.

CALHOUN *rises and stands with his back to her*. SHIRLEY *enters at door L. of C. at Back and stands there, unperceived by either BETTINA or CALHOUN*.

BETTINA. What's the matter?

CALHOUN. Nothing. I was just thinking of—France.

BETTINA. Is somebody sailing with—you?

CALHOUN. Nobody's sailing with me—and—(*bitterly*) nobody's caring whether I go or whether I come back.

BETTINA. Doesn't anyone love you?

CALHOUN. I'm afraid not, Bettina.

BETTINA. Are you sure?

CALHOUN. Pretty sure—now. You see, I thought—maybe she did, but I was mistaken.

BETTINA (*after a pause*). Would you like to have—*me*? (*Rises.*)

CALHOUN (*turning and grasping her hands*). I'd love it. Why off there in the trenches when I'm lonesome and homesick, it will be splendid to think that there is one little girl who—cares.

BETTINA. And you'll be my very own Sammy?

CALHOUN (*still holding her hands*). Your very own.

SHIRLEY (*coming around back of BETTINA*). Why, Betty, think how late it is—and oh so far beyond bedtime. (CALHOUN *lets go BETTINA's hands*.) If you are very quiet about it—(*putting arm around BETTINA's shoulder*) you can slip upstairs right now without anyone seeing you.

BETTINA (*to CALHOUN*). But you haven't told me your real name.

CALHOUN. I'll tell you—tomorrow.

BETTINA (*going slowly to L.*). You promise?

CALHOUN (*following her*). I promise.

BETTINA. Then I don't mind going. (*Extending her hand and curtsying.*) Good-night, soldier man.

CALHOUN (*bending over it*). Good-night, fairy god-mother. (*Exit BETTINA at L. C. CALHOUN stands looking after her.*)

SHIRLEY. You seem to have made a conquest. (*Sits on settee.*)

CALHOUN. Don't spoil it that way. A child's friendship is given—not forced.

SHIRLEY. She seems to be taking entire possession of you.

CALHOUN. Why shouldn't she? (*Stands back of settee.*)

SHIRLEY. You don't seem to remember that you are—engaged.

CALHOUN. I've had no opportunity during the evening to forget it

SHIRLEY (*looking up at him:*) Congratulations?

CALHOUN. So many that I began to believe it myself. In fact, I've been wondering just which one of the old crowd I'd have for best man.

SHIRLEY. I've selected my bridesmaids already. The only thing that's troubling me now is the color of their dresses.

CALHOUN (*sitting by her*). Oh, come, Shirley, let's cut out a big wedding.

SHIRLEY. I've been hoping you'd say that. I hate crowds and it would bore me to death to have a lot of silly, simpering bridesmaids—

CALHOUN (*disgustedly*). Decorating me with bits of flowers and calling me—Clay.

SHIRLEY. Then how's this? Leave tomorrow morning for the city, where we'll meet Dad—

CALHOUN. Sha'n't we take Bill and Nan along?

SHIRLEY. I suppose we ought to. Then have our little ceremony all to ourselves.

CALHOUN. That's bully.

SHIRLEY. What shall I wear?

CALHOUN (*softly*). Just what you wore when I first saw you.

SHIRLEY. I can't. The rain ruined it.

CALHOUN. But I want you to wear it.

SHIRLEY (*looking steadily at him*). Then—I *will*.

CALHOUN. And tomorrow evening we'll go to the gayest, brightest kind of a place—

SHIRLEY (*eagerly*). Yes?

CALHOUN. Find a little table with rose shades—just for two—

SHIRLEY. And then?

CALHOUN. I'll be leaving you—hang the luck! (*Rises and turns back to her.*)

SHIRLEY (*rising*). Oh, but you *won't*. I'm not that kind of a bride. Let you go—over there—*alone*? Not much. When you sail for France—I sail with you. (*Comes up behind him.*)

CALHOUN (*turning*). When you sail for *France*! How could I forget? What about the other man?

SHIRLEY. What other man?

CALHOUN. The one who is taking you to France.

SHIRLEY. Oh, I see—Betty's been talking!

CALHOUN. And I've learned that the Captain has failed to recognize—existing conditions. Do you think that you've played quite fair with me, Shirley? (*Stands back of telephone chair.*)

SHIRLEY (*resting on arm of settee*). Why not?

CALHOUN. If you had to have your fun, why didn't you take the name of your real lover?

SHIRLEY. I told you why I chose your name—and I'm sorry that it all happened this way. (*Defiantly.*) No, I'm not sorry, either.

CALHOUN. I shouldn't be—if it were not for the other fellow.

SHIRLEY. What has he to do with it?

CALHOUN. How can you ask me that? Or perhaps it is just an episode to—you.

SHIRLEY. I hope not.

CALHOUN (*sarcastically*). Something you can laugh about—with *him*!

SHIRLEY (*rising*). I don't let any man speak to me like that, Clay Calhoun. (*Walks to R. They turn away from each other.*)

CALHOUN (*after a pause*). What sort of a fellow is he?

SHIRLEY. Stupid. And oh so irritating.

CALHOUN (*turning*). *What!* And you're in love with him?

SHIRLEY. So much that it—hurts.

CALHOUN. When do you marry him?

SHIRLEY. When he asks me.

CALHOUN. What do you mean? (*Comes to back of settee.*)

SHIRLEY. What can I mean except I'm not sure that he—cares.

CALHOUN. Then he must be a consummate idiot.

SHIRLEY. He is.

CALHOUN. And you expect—him—to take you to France?

SHIRLEY. I expect that very thing. But he doesn't seem to understand.

CALHOUN. The man can't have average intelligence.

SHIRLEY. He hasn't. (*Turns.*)

CALHOUN. I don't understand you, Shirley, and I don't seem to understand this situation—so what is the use of my talking? Anyway, I'm off tomorrow and we'll probably never meet again. You've given me the most exciting day

of my life—and I wish you luck. (*Comes to her and holds out his hand.*)

SHIRLEY *is about to respond when there is a sharp tap upon the French window. CALHOUN draws SHIRLEY to back of stage. After a moment MOLLY enters hesitatingly*
R.

SHIRLEY (*meeting her at C.*) Oh, Molly—Molly!
(*CALHOUN withdraws to left of stage.*)

MOLLY. Did I startle you, Miss Shirley? I didn't mean to—but I've been waitin' 'round to see you.

SHIRLEY. Why, Molly, what has happened?

MOLLY. Nothin' has really happened, Miss Shirley, but I want my pin.

SHIRLEY (*in surprise*). Your pin!

MOLLY. My pin. Oh, I know it looks queer to you and I'm ashamed to be takin' it back this way—but I'm seein' things different, Miss Shirley, and I need it, that's all.

SHIRLEY (*as she pins it on her*). And you shall have it, Molly. I had no right to take it, I had no right to wear it—and I'm sorry.

MOLLY. And I'm sorry—for what I said this afternoon. You didn't hear me—but Miss Nan did—and I didn't understand—then.

SHIRLEY. Understand what, Molly?

MOLLY (*touching her pin*). What *it* means. I thought only of Tim's goin' and that he might never come back. And now—

SHIRLEY. Yes?

MOLLY. It makes me proud to feel that I have someone to give—that I can do my part by bein' brave and by smilin' through the tears.

SHIRLEY. Oh, Molly, you make me ashamed.

MOLLY. For—after all—Miss Shirley, the flag does come first—and we can't think of ourselves, can we?

SHIRLEY. No—we can't think of ourselves.

MOLLY. So that's why I want my pin. (*Touches it.*) For it is a star in the darkness and it's goin' to help me to play the woman's game and to play it straight and true. (*Pauses.*) And I won't be botherin' you any more, Miss Shirley, and you don't mind my askin' you for it? (*Goes toward window.*)

SHIRLEY. I'm glad you came, Molly, and I thank you for what you have done for me. (*Exit MOLLIE through French window and SHIRLEY comes slowly to C.*) It's a big thing I've been playing with, Clay, and I didn't realize it—before.

CALHOUN (*coming to her*). And I didn't realize—before—what it would have meant if you had worn the pin—for me.

SHIRLEY. I'm sorry. (*She seats herself on settee.*)

CALHOUN. I'm not. For it has given me a memory—and we cherish memories—in the trenches. (*Pauses.*) Shirley?

SHIRLEY. Yes?

CALHOUN. Ten minutes ago I shouldn't have said to you what I'm saying now; but when a man faces unknown things, trivial conventionalities fall away.

SHIRLEY (*softly*). Go on.

CALHOUN (*at back of settee*). And—if I never come back, I want you to know that when you entered my life this afternoon, you came to stay. That's all. (*Crosses R.*)

SHIRLEY. You haven't known me a day.

CALHOUN. It's a time when many things can happen—in a day. (*Comes back of her.*)

SHIRLEY. Midsummer madness!

CALHOUN. Perhaps so—but the madness—lingers. Good bye. (*Holds out his hand.*)

SHIRLEY. Why should I tell you good bye. (*Rises and walks to L.*)

CALHOUN. There's the other man.

SHIRLEY. There is no other man.

CALHOUN. What do you mean? (*Rushes to her.*)

SHIRLEY. That you and Betty didn't understand. The man who will take me to France came into my life this afternoon—and he came—to stay. (*Sits.*)

CALHOUN (*sitting by her*). Shirley!

SHIRLEY. You should have known all along, you stupid thing. For you *are* stupid, aren't you, Clay?

CALHOUN (*as he puts his arms around her*). Not any more!

CURTAIN.

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May Blossom.....	Her Friend
Mrs. Plunk.....	A Chaperone
Willard Bland.....	A Father
Iona Lotts.....	An Agent
Smudge.....	A Valet
Bill.....	A Wanderer
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Tony Kilbuck.....His Son, Just Out of College
Mr. Barnaby Bird.....The Boss of Flagg County
Mr. Mulberry.....Chief Attorney for the Road
Bruce Ferguson.....A Clerk in the General Offices
Artie.....An Office Boy
Mr. Perry Allen.....A Young Gentleman Farmer
Jessamine Lee.....The Girl
Mrs. Van Dyne....An Agent for the P. D. Q. Railroad
Imogene McCarty.....A Stenographer
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